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➔ WE PUT FALKEN'S NEWEST MUD-TERRAIN TO THE TEST, PG. 42

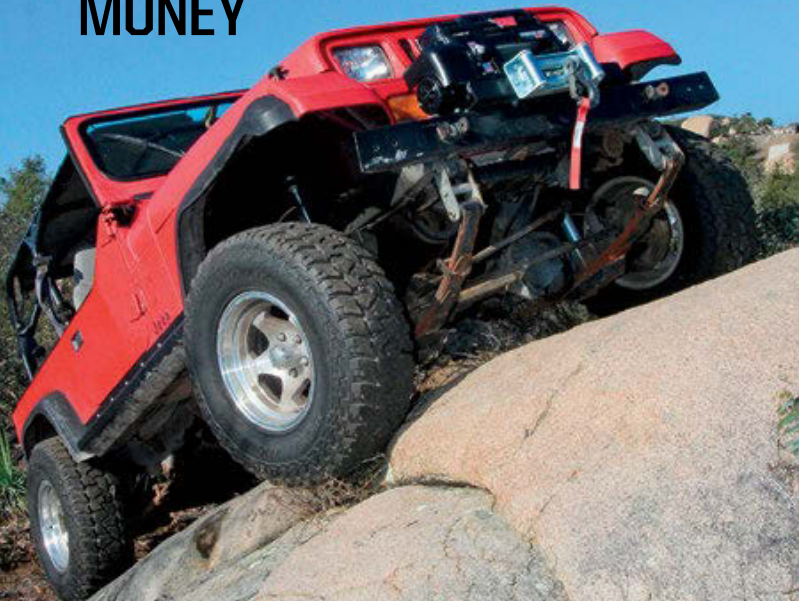


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ON THE COVER: Our ace freelancer, Ben Battles, caught the Dodge in the mud holler, while Editor Hazel shot the red rockcrawling Wrangler.

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Vehicular Viagra

I've gotten soft. Not around the middle. Well, a little around the middle. If you only read the title and saw the photo of our long-term 2014 Range Rover Sport, you're probably expecting me to start talking about how the Sport's 510hp supercharged 5.0L V-8 is like a much-needed infusion of vigor and vitality. Nope. It's actually quite the opposite. The Sport is the reason I've gone limp. Just a wet noodle behind the wheel. A real meat bag. It's turned my driving skills flaccid and made me a whiney, pathetic excuse of an iron-fisted 4x4 ramrod.

I used to be a hardcore off-road stud. My daily driver was a Ramcharger with no roof and 42-inch TSLs. It was my only vehicle and shuttled me to the office, grocery store, or airport. I had to plan ahead for any grade 'cause the Dodge only had 4.10s in the diffs and a 250,000-mile 318 underhood. Passing? Why on earth would I do something as crazy as that? If I ever tried a pass that 6,800 rpm-induced valve float didn't stymie, then death wobble from the unbalanced TSLs on re-centered HUMVEE beadlocks would. Better to just stay in my lane with two hands on the wheel and wait for the next unexplained noise to give my brain something to occupy its time. There was nothing to listen to but my thoughts anyway 'cause the radio got tossed in the dumpster along with the rest of the dash, carpet, and doors.

When I sold the Dodge, I went for my version of luxury: a stock '71 CJ-6 I used for my 250-miles-per-day, five-days-per-week commute. The drive sucked, but the Jeep and I bonded. After all, what are 1,200-miles a week between friends? Weather? I probably shoulda thought of that when I was yanking the heater and wipers. They woulda come in handy many a cold, rainy night. Not that the open-top Jeep woulda retained much heat or the wipers

woulda helped inside the windshield. And while the Buick 225 probably coulda managed a pass, I never dared for fear I'd need to come to a screeching 70-0 mph halt—or whatever the '71 10-inch drum brake equivalent of "halt" is. I'm pretty sure it's "crash."

After the CJ, I rotated through a couple other piles before landing in the '89 Wrangler, which I still own. Like all my other vehicles, it's radio-delete. Only instead of passing the time wondering about errant sounds, I just sat back and waited for the narcotic-like exhaust and head gasket leaks to fog my brain. Nowadays I don't even bother putting the top on for the winter. We both like it better that way, and I'm getting much less dain bramage.

But for the past year I've been enveloped in this warm Range Rovey cocoon of luxury. I'm sheltered from the elements and have brakes that can pull a jet out of the sky and an engine with absurd amounts of passing power. And to top it all off, the stupid thing actually wheels well off road, so I don't even have the excuse of taking something more uncivilized to the trail. I'm an addict. I love it. I can't live without it. But now I kinda have no choice because our time with it comes to an end in the June '15 issue.

I'll soon be swapping the 2014 Range Rover Sport for the 2015 Ram Power Wagon, which won our Pickup Truck of the Year award in this issue. No doubt, I'll once again harden into the masochistic off-road stud I once was. The factory selectable lockers, lever-operated T-case, sat-nav, seat heaters, satellite radio, power seats—um, crap. Maybe I could take the doors off it and kick out the windshield. Naaah. It's just a sign of the times I guess. You don't have to suffer to enjoy a vehicle on-road that wheels well off-road. Unless you really want to.

—CHRISTIAN HAZEL

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4X4 ACCESSORIES



SUPPORT GROUP

Christian, I just got done reading your Firing Order editorial about having vehicular Tourette's, and I loved it. I am sure that I also have this disease. Not five minutes before I read your article I was just

thinking about how cool it would be to buy and build a Land Rover Discovery Series II. I had even gone as far as looking on Craigslist. I also was looking at K5 Blazers and CJ-7s. Damn it all. I still have to finish my K10 and my four-wheeler, plus a full-time job as a mechanic and owning my own gun shop. Anyway, thought you would like to know you aren't alone. If you decide to start a support group I want in.

MATTHEW GARDNER
THE BAT CAVE

You own a gun shop? That's a whole other area of Tourette's for me. The only thing that keeps my safe from bending at the seams is Commiefornia's ridiculous nanny laws. Oh, and we have a support group for vehicular accumulation disorder already. You're reading it right now.



WE SUCK

Just read your article on the '16 Ford Bronco, and please know that I would now like to kick you in the nuts. I own a new '15 Ford F-250 4x4 right now, but have owned three Broncos, two F-150 4x4s, and three F-250s. Since you are IDIOTS, that's nine Fords. I'm a beloved Ford person, and I was set to sell my '10 H3 Alpha Hummer to buy the '16 Ford Bronco you described. YOU SUCK!

JAMES G. DAVIS
LAKE HAVASU, AZ

WHERE TO WRITE

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GARAGE ENVY

I have enjoyed the fresh approach that you have taken with my *Four Wheeler*. Reading your Dec. '15 editorial on garages, I immediately related and am responding to your suggestion to share photos of the reader's garages. My wife and I have had about seven different houses over the years, and my only requirement was that there had to be some type of garage for my projects. Many years later, and after retiring, I finally built my ideal shop. The 30x40 "barn" shown in the attached pictures is that product. The raw lumber came from our woods, sawed by a portable sawmill, and was erected solely by me. The 10,000-pound post lift is what allows me to follow my new passion: building and wheeling IHC Scouts in the Southeast mountains.



JOE SMITH
VIA EMAIL

Awesome shop, Joe! And just a reminder to everybody else out there who takes pride in their garage or workshop, no matter how big or small, packed or sparse, send your photos and story to me at christian.hazel@fourwheeler.com with "Shop Share" in the subject. Make sure your images are high-res JPEG format with at least 1600 by 1200 pixels.

Our intrepid editorial delinquent, Agustin Jimenez, not only got you, but most of the computer-pecking civilized world with that story. Jeez, we even said at the end of the article it was an April Fool's joke. Now when we write about Jeep's '16 diesel-electric Wrangler-based pickup that gets 100 mpg and emits strawberry-scented water vapor out the tailpipe nobody will believe us.

WRANGLER WRONGERED

Two other items for John Cappa to add to the '07-current Rubicon story, "Wrangler Wronged," in the Feb. '15 issue:

Smartbar: My first one failed a couple months out of warranty, and the replacement failed 3 years later. JKS makes a nice kit to convert to cable operated.

Transfer case shifter: The little plastic bushings failed also out of warranty somewhere outside of Animas Forks, Colorado. Advance Adapters makes a great replacement shifter linkage.

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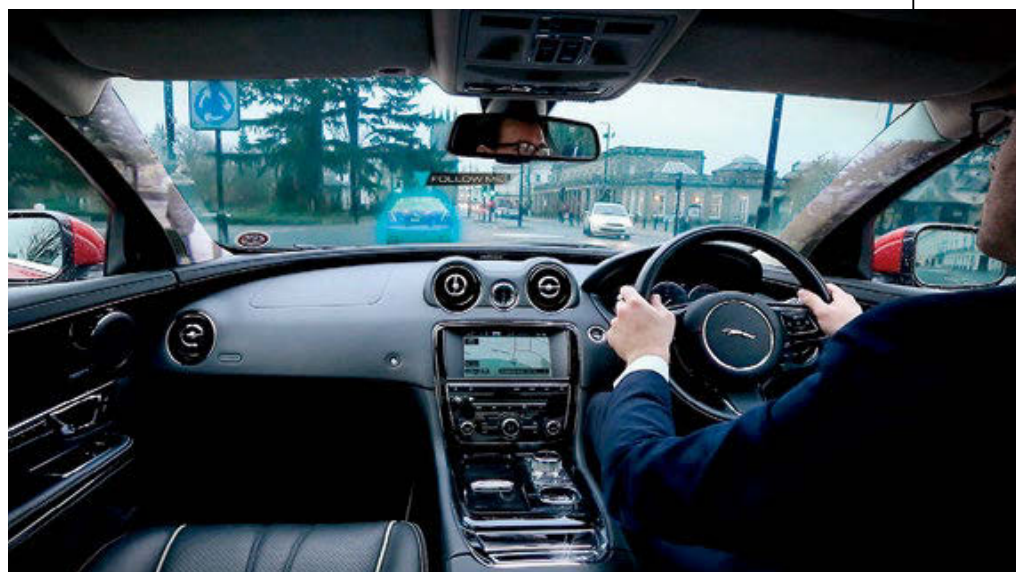
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BY **TORI TELLEM**
EDITOR@FOURWHEELER.COM

RIPRII

AUTOMOTIVE NEWS



THAT'S INTERESTING

➔ **The winner in the Full Stock** class at the 47th Tecate SCORE Baja 1000 was a '15 Toyota Tundra TRD Pro Series truck. The coach of the winning desert team was the Ironman himself, Ivan Stewart.

➔ **While we're talking Toyota, it's** expanding its southeast Michigan R&D facility, making it a total of \$126 million going toward expanding Toy's powertrain/vehicle development in the Michigan area.

➔ **History made: The first time** the military auctioned off surplus Humvees was through govplanet.com, an online marketplace for buying and selling government assets. Thank the Department of Defense. The 25 available Humvees were going for as much as \$41,000.

➔ **The Tweel lives. It's an airless** radial tire from Michelin. The company has opened a plant in North America to produce the nonpneumatic tire for com-

mercial apps. The Tweel makes the tire and wheel assembly one married piece.

➔ **The 3.0L EcoDiesel got** named one of Ward's Best Engines for 2015.

➔ **Audi Unite: It's a car-sharing** service like ZipCar, in which you choose your Audi, find four other people you like, and hatch a plan for sharing the vehicle. If you live in Stockholm, Sweden, that is.

➔ **New name: Chrysler Group is** now FCA US (as in, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles).

➔ **Bobcat has a blog:** blog.bobcat.com.

➔ **Jaguar Land Rover is** researching new technologies,

including a 360-degree view, with no pillars blocking the view. Rather, a screen embedded in the surface of the pillar would carry a live video feed of angles outside of the vehicle/removing blind spots. They're being called transparent roof pillars.

➔ **Stats from the Census Bureau** for its American Community Survey compared the millennial generation of young adults (age 18-34) to young adults from 1980. In terms of driving habits, nothing much has changed. About 8 in 10 drive to work, which is pretty much the same as 1980. Alabama has the highest share, while New York has the lowest.

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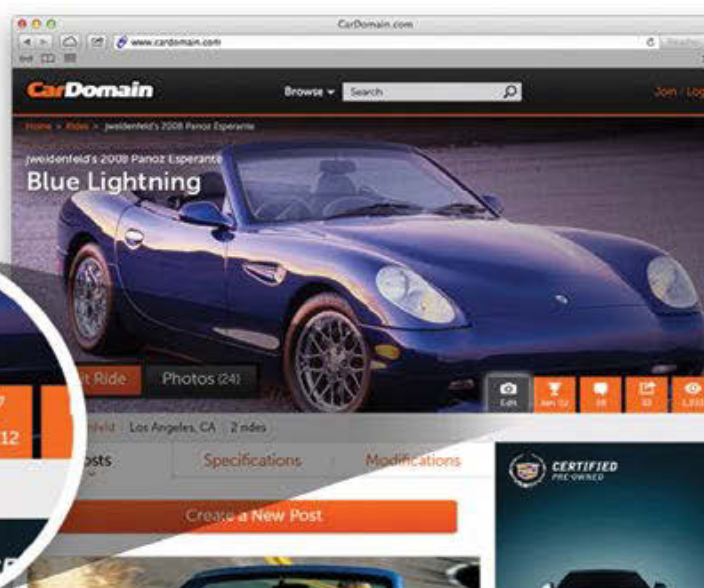


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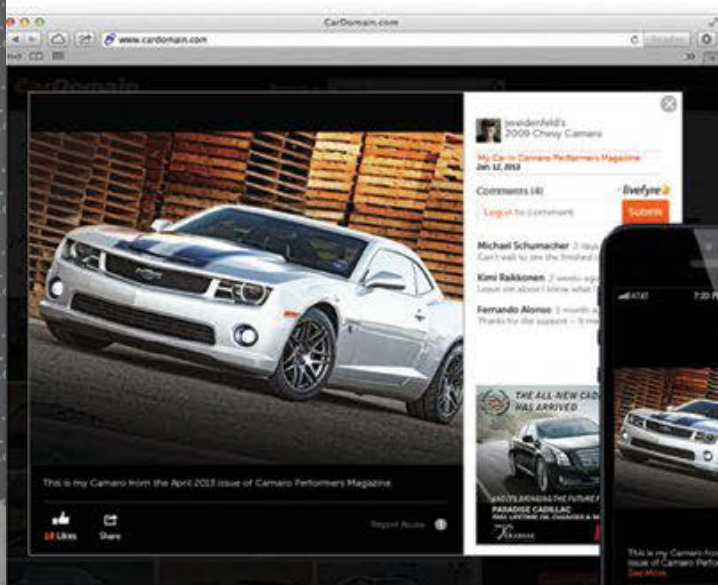
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WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE INDUSTRY



➔ **Lund has acquired** Rampage Products.

➔ **For the first time in its** history, Bosch has launched a performance gauge line in North America.

➔ **Teamvalvoline.com** is a spot for racers and enthusiasts, with

exclusive content, special offers, and educational stuff.

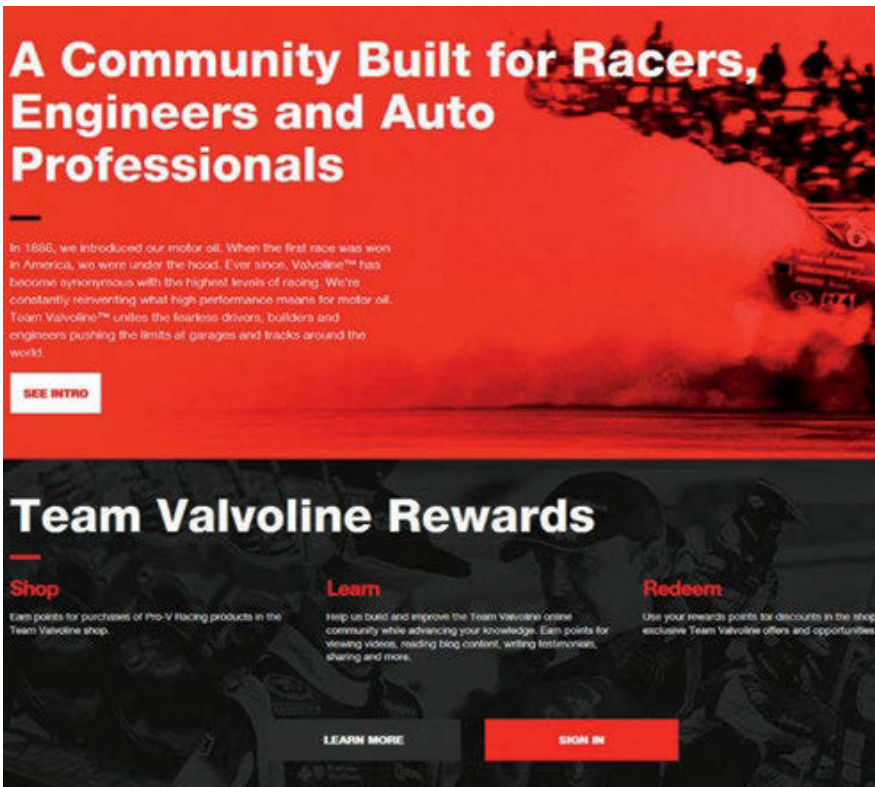
➔ **Omix-ADA will keep providing** grants for off-road proactiveness in 2015 through its Rugged Ridge Trail Access Program.

➔ **Buy a gearset, get money.** AAM has a rebate going on for 8.6-inch

gearsets for axle ratios of 3.73, 3.42, and 4.10. Learn more at demandaam.com.

➔ **SnugTop was founded in 1959.** That makes it 56 years old now.

➔ **Heatshield Products** has hit the 30-year milestone.



IS IT TRUE?

➔ **Iowa is figuring out** how to make driver's licenses digital via the phone?

➔ **Audi is producing e-diesel** out of water, CO2, and green electricity?

Random Photo We Dug

'15 Ford F-150. 1,200-pound pumpkin. Why? Why not.

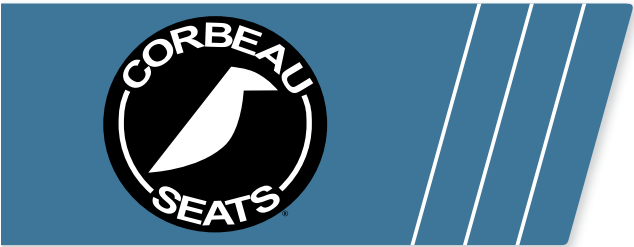




✓RANDOM QUOTE:

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—STATEMENT FROM THE WHITE HOUSE,
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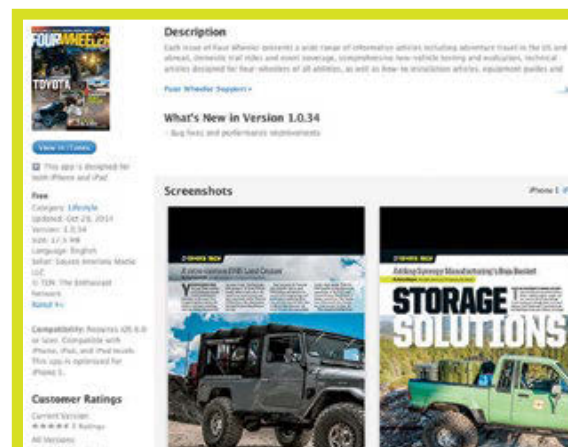
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⬆ This is the Atom Nomad Buggy

Meet the Atom Nomad out of Ariel Motor in the UK. It has a Honda 2.4L four-banger, making 235 horses and 300 lb-ft of torque and is said to go 0-60 in 3.4 seconds. A steel tube chassis, wishbone suspension, Eibach coils, and rack-and-pinion steering are among the mechanicals. The wheelbase is about 92 inches. Learn more at arielmotor.co.uk. **FW**

YOUR GOVERNMENT AT WORK

➔ eCall is the European Union at work:

It wants this system functional throughout Europe by the end of 2015, and it's similar to On-Star in that it automatically calls an emergency center in the case of a crash. It's an effort to cut down on emergency response time and help victims quicker.

➔ The Indian capital of Delhi at work: It has

banned Uber, claiming it has violated the Motor Vehicle Act. Plus, there are claims of an alleged rape from a driver.

➔ Michigan legislation potentially making

front and rear license plates the law (versus the current single plate) has died.



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➔ DANA FORD

After 60ish years since its development, Dana has finally entered Ford 9-inch market for real with its Spicer third member drop-out housings. The new Spicer third members are available in either nodular iron or premium-grade aluminum. The Spicer third members come with a built-in fill plug, billet adjuster nuts, an anti-stick reusable gasket, and can be had with a carrier bore of either a 3.25 inches for 35/40 spline 'shafts or 3.062 inches for 28/31 spline 'shafts. **INFO:** Dana, 800/621-8084, danaunleashed.com.



➔ LIGHT MIGHT

Trail Products has added to its recently launched line of UTV parts its Trail and Rock Series Front Bumper and Rocker Guards for Jeeps. Designed and manufactured in the USA, Trail Products offers top-quality parts at affordable prices. All Trail Series parts are manufactured out of 1/8-inch steel to save weight. For those who like to play a little rougher, the company also offers its Rock Series, which is made from 3/16-inch steel for serious off-road protection. Jeep applications for CJ-7 and '87-present Wrangler are offered. **INFO:** Trail Products, 805/416-4929, trail-products.com.



➔ RED RIM

Centerline Forged Wheels has added a few new styles in its lineup for the off-road truck market. The company was pretty stingy with information in its press release, but we thought the company's new LT-1 wheel with gloss-black machined face and optional red ring looked good enough to share despite the lack of info. The wheel shown is an 8-lug version in 20x12 size. **INFO:** Centerline Forged Wheels, 800/345-8671, centerlinewheels.com.

➔ JUICE BOX

Smittybilt's new Electrical Power Supply (E.P.S.) inverter and generator keeps all of your electrical devices fully charged and running, regardless of where you decide to set up camp. The E.P.S. Generator has a wireless remote to either start up or shut down, cranks out 2,600 peak and 2,300 continuous watts of power, generates only 59 dB of noise at a 25 percent load, and features a smart throttle to automatically vary engine speed for maximum fuel efficiency. The four-stroke, OHV engine has a 1.5-gallon fuel tank and is fully CARB compliant for use in California. **INFO:** Smittybilt, 888/717-5797, smittybilt.com.



➔ WELD MUCH?

TIG Welding Pyrex Cups? Don't mind if we do. USAWeld.com keeps on top of the latest welding innovations. TIG welding is easier when you're able to see what you are doing, so that's why the company now carries HTP's clear Pyrex Cups that give you unparalleled visibility of your TIG arc and what you are working on. The Pyrex Cup kits are available to fit all standard-size TIG torches and prices start at only \$35.95 through USAWeld.com. **INFO:** USAWeld.com, 800/USA-WELD, usaweld.com. **FW**

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2007-2013 1500 PU / SUV 4WD

2"	Front Leveling Strut Spacers	\$64.95
3.5"	Complete Kit w/Upper Arms	\$479.95
4.75"	Combo Kit (3.5" Susp / 1.25" Body)	\$549.95
5"	Complete Kit w/N2 Rear Shocks	\$999.95
6"	Complete Kit w/N2 Rear Shocks	\$999.95
7.5"	Complete Kit w/N2 Rear Shocks	\$999.95

2011-2015 2500 HD PU 4WD

1.5-2"	Front Leveling Torsion Keys	\$159.95
7.5"	Complete Kit w/2.0 Shocks	\$1399.95

DODGE



2009-2015 1500 Ram PU 4WD

2.5"	Front Leveling Kit	\$129.95
3.75"	Combo Kit (2.5" Susp/1.25" Body)*	\$249.95
4"	Complete Kit w/2.2 Rear Shocks	\$1249.95
6"	Complete Kit w/2.2 Rear Shocks	\$1399.95

2014 2500 Ram PU 4WD

2.5"	Front Leveling Coil Spacers	\$99.95
5"	Complete Kit w/Radius Arms	\$999.95

2003-2013 2500/3500 Ram PU 4WD

2"	Front Leveling Coils	\$179.95
2.5"	Front Leveling Spacers	\$99.95
5"	Complete Kit w/2.0 Shocks	\$699.95
5"	X-Series Kit w/Adj Arms & Shocks	\$899.95
5"	Long Arm Kit w/2.0 Shocks	\$1299.95

FORD



2015 F-150 4WD

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5"	Complete Kit	NEW!	\$1299.95
6"	Complete Kit	NEW!	\$1299.95

2009-2014 F-150 4WD

2.5"	Front Leveling Strut Extensions	\$99.95
4"	Complete Kit	NEW LOW PRICE! \$999.95
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2005-2015 F-250 Super Duty 4WD

3"	Complete Kit w/Front Spacers	\$379.95
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4.5"	Complete Kit w/2.0 Shocks	\$649.95
6"	Radius Arm Drop Kit w/Shocks	\$799.95
6"	4-Link Radius Arm Kit w/Shocks	\$1299.95

*2009-2012 models ONLY!

JEEP JK



2.5"	Coil Spacer Kit	\$139.95
2.5"	Coils w/shock relocation	\$249.95
2.5"	Coils w/Perf. 2.2 shocks	\$349.95 - \$329.95
3.25"	Coils w/Perf. 2.2 shocks	\$399.95
3.5"	Complete Kit w/N2.0	\$499.95
3.75"	2.5" susp. / 1.25" body	\$449.95 - \$419.95
4"	Complete Kit w/shocks	\$575.95 - \$499.95
4"	X-series Kit	\$1249.95 - \$1199.95
6"	X-series Kit	\$1339.95
4"/6"	07-14 Long Arm Upgrade*	\$1199.95
4"	07-14 Long Arm Susp.*	\$1999.95
6"	07-14 Long Arm Susp.*	\$2099.95

JEEP TJ



0.75"	Leveling Spacers	\$39.95
1.5"	Coil Spacer Kit	\$199.95
2"	Coil Spacer Kit	\$129.95 - \$109.95
2.5"	X-series Kit w/X-Flex arms	\$949.95
3.25"	Coils w/2.2 shocks	\$399.95 - \$369.95
3.75"	2" susp. / 1.25" body	\$429.95 - \$389.95
4"	Complete Kit w/N2.0	\$549.95 - \$499.95
4"	X-series Kit w/X-Flex arms	\$999.95
6"	X-series Kit w/X-Flex arms	\$1049.95
2.5"	Long Arm Suspension	\$1499.95
4"	Long Arm Suspension	\$1599.95
6"	Long Arm Suspension	\$1649.95

JEEP XJ



1.5"	Coil Spacer Kit	\$249.95
3"	Coils w/ N2.0 Shocks	\$255.95
3"	Series II Kit w/N2.0 Shocks	\$345.95
4.5"	Complete Kit w/N2.0	\$499.95 - \$459.95
4.5"	X-series Kit w/X-Flex arms-N2.0*	\$829.95
6.5"	X-series Kit w/X-Flex arms-N2.0*	\$899.95
4.5"	Long Arm Suspension	\$1299.95
4.5"	Long Arm Suspension*	\$1399.95
6.5"	Long Arm Suspension*	\$1449.95

*Includes new rear leaf springs

*2012-2015 models add \$190 to long arm kit cost

JEEP WJ/ZJ



1999-2004 WJ Grand Cherokee

2"	Coil Spacer Kit w/N2.0 Shocks	\$249.95
4"	Complete Kit w/Perf 2.2 Shocks	\$649.95
4"	X-series w/X-Flex Arms	\$799.95 - \$749.95
4"	Long Arm Suspension	\$1499.95

1993-1998 ZJ Grand Cherokee

1.5"	Coil Spacer Kit w/Shocks	\$205.95
3.5"	Complete Kit w/N2.0 Shocks	\$399.95
4"	Series II Kit w/arms & Shocks	\$599.95
4"	X-series Kit w/X-Flex arms - N2.0	\$779.95
4"	Long Arm Suspension	\$1499.95

NISSAN



2004-2015 Titan 4WD

2"	Front Leveling Strut Extensions	\$99.95
3"	Front Leveling Kit w/Upper Arms	\$349.95
6"	Complete Kit w/2.0 Rear Shocks	\$1199.95

2005-2014 Frontier / Xterra 4WD

1.5"	Rear Lift Shackles	\$64.95
2.5"	Front Leveling Strut Extensions	\$99.95
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1986.5-1997 D21 Hardbody PU 4WD

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TOYOTA



2007-2015 Tundra 4WD

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2.5-3"	Leveling Lift Kit w/rear blocks	\$169.95
4.5"	Complete Kit w/2.0 Rear Shocks	\$1249.95
6"	Complete Kit w/2.0 Rear Shocks	\$1299.95

1999-2006 Tundra 4WD

2.5"	Leveling Lift Kit w/rear blocks	\$269.95
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2005-2014 Tacoma 4WD

3"	Leveling Lift Kit w/rear blocks	\$249.95
4"	Complete Kit w/2.0 Rear Shocks	\$999.95
6"	Complete Kit w/2.0 Rear Shocks	\$999.95

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2.5"	06-08 Ram 1500 (4WD)	\$99.95
2.5"	94-14 Ram 2500/3500 (4WD)	\$99.95
2"	05-10 Dakota / Raider (2WD)	\$99.95

FORD MODELS

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2.5"	97-03 F-150 (4WD)	\$99.95
2"	97-03 F-150 (2WD)	\$129.95
1.5"	80-96 F-150 / Bronco (4WD/2WD)	\$129.95
1.5"	05-15 F-250 SD Coil Kit (4WD)	\$159.95
2"	05-15 F-250 SD Spacer Kit (4WD)	\$99.95
2.5"	99-04 F-250/350 SD (4WD)	\$309.95
2.5"	03-13 Expedition (4WD/2WD)	\$169.95
1.5"	83-97 Ranger/Bronco II (4WD/2WD)	\$129.95

HUMMER MODELS

2.5"	05-10 Hummer H3 (4WD)	\$99.95
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TOYOTA MODELS

2.5-3"	07-15 Tundra (4WD)	\$129.95
2.5-3"	07-15 Tundra (2WD)	\$99.95
2.5"	99-06 Tundra (4WD)	\$269.95
3"	05-14 Tacoma (4WD)	\$249.95
2.5"	95.5-04 Tacoma (4WD)	\$239.95

NISSAN MODELS

2"	04-15 Titan (4WD/2WD)	\$99.95
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CHEVY COLORADO CREW CAB Z71

Four incredible pickup trucks battle extreme terrain but only one will be our 2015 Pickup Truck of the Year



WHEELED

By **Four Wheeler staff** editor@fourwheeler.com Photography: Ken Brubaker

EACH MODEL YEAR, PICKUP TRUCK MANUFACTURERS integrate new features onto the trucks they create and every few years manufacturers introduce significantly changed or all-new trucks. This perpetually changing truck landscape means that to keep up requires a lot of research. For those who are in the market for a new truck, it translates to a lot of visits to dealerships to inspect and drive these rigs. Dealerships can be accommodating, but they're prob-

ably not going to let you have each truck for a week so you can pile 900 miles on them in a variety of terrain both on- and off-road. And even if they did, you probably don't have time for that because you need to work to earn a living.

This is where we come in. Each year, we corral the latest and greatest pickup trucks for a weeklong test doing exactly what we just said. For the last few decades we've tested substantially changed or all-new trucks, all at

one time, in a variety of terrain, and it's called Pickup Truck of the Year (PTOTY).

For 2015, the field of competitors included the all-new Chevy Colorado Z71, the 6.4L Hemi-powered Ram Power Wagon, and the Bilstein/TRD-equipped Toyota Tacoma TRD Pro and Toyota Tundra TRD Pro. The all-new '15 Ford F-150 also qualified, but Ford was unable to provide a vehicle by the test date. To qualify for PTOTY, vehicles must be all-new or substantially revised from



TOYOTA TACOMA DOUBLE CAB TRD PRO



RAM POWER WAGON CREW CAB



TOYOTA TUNDRA CREWMAX TRD PRO



WARRIORS

the previous model year, have a two-speed transfer case, a production run of at least 1,500 vehicles available in the U.S., and be on sale by March 15, 2015.

During the week of testing, we left no stone unturned, as the saying goes. This year, we started out by putting each truck on an RTI ramp to measure suspension articulation, and then we pointed the trucks toward a racetrack to measure acceleration and braking. Once all of that was completed, we spent the next

four days testing in a wide range of specially chosen terrain. You can read more about the testing later in the story. This year, we had seven experienced judges at PTOTY, and as testing took place, they were analyzing a wide range of topics from four-wheel-drive system operation and function to cargo bed tie-down function. Judges were required to score each vehicle in a variety of areas as well as record detailed notes in the official judging books. In the end, this information was used to crown a

winner. You can read more details of the judging procedure elsewhere in this story.

This year's test was quite fascinating, indeed. In the end, there were some bumps and bruises to the rigs, but nothing major, which was a testament to their ruggedness. After a week of living with these rigs, their strengths and weaknesses were clear.

So read on to learn what's new with these four trucks, what works, what doesn't, which vehicle won, and much more.

4th Place

CHEVY COLORADO Z71

What's New

The midsize Colorado is all-new for 2015. This full-frame truck is available as an extended cab longbed (6-foot, 2-inch bed) or a Crew Cab in either shortbed (5-foot, 2-inch bed) or longbed configurations. The Colorado uses an independent front suspension with aluminum knuckles and a coil-over-shock setup. Out back is a solid axle with a leaf-spring suspension. Depending on configuration, the Colorado is available with either a 2.5L I-4 engine or a 3.6L V-6 engine (mated to a six-speed manual or six-speed automatic transmission depending on cab style). The transfer case is a two-speed unit and is electronically shifted. Compared to the previous-generation '12 model, the '15 Colorado is almost 6 inches wider and 3 inches taller, and it has an almost 3-inch-wider track. For PTOTY, Chevy sent us a V-6-powered Crew Cab shortbed in Z71 trim. Strangely, the Z71 "Suspension Package" doesn't include any suspension upgrades, but it does include a G80 automatic locking rear differential, transfer case skidplate, front towhooks, projector headlamps, 17-inch wheels, and all-terrain tires.



WHAT'S HOT:

Off-road maneuverability, fuel mileage, ride, on-road handling, stiff body structure

WHAT'S NOT:

Noisy engine, poor approach angle, 4WD selector knob location, lack of off-road content in the Z71 package



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<p>NEW '15</p> <p>KMC XD SERIES KMC XD SERIES MONSTER II 17 18 20</p>	<p>NEW '15</p> <p>ATX SERIES ATX SERIES RAVINE 17 18</p>	<p>NEW '15</p> <p>WORX WORX 808 BEAST II 18 20</p>	<p>NEW '15</p> <p>MOTO METAL MOTO METAL M0975 17 18 20</p>	<p>NEW '15</p> <p>BLACK ROCK BLACK ROCK 937 TYPE 8P 17</p>	<p>NEW '15</p> <p>METHOD RACE WHEELS METHOD MESH 16 17 18 20</p>

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Ramp and Track

On the 20-degree RTI ramp, the Colorado earned a score of 391 points. The low 17.3-degree approach angle of the truck meant the low-hanging front air dam desperately wanted to stuff into the RTI ramp as we drove on. To avoid air dam damage we concocted a ramp prior to the RTI ramp using wood blocks. At the track, the 305hp V-6 hauled the approximately 4,450-pound truck to 60 mph in 8.6 seconds and through the quarter-mile in 16.6 seconds at 86.2 mph. The Colorado’s four-wheel-disc brakes combined with the standard ABS to take the truck from 60 mph to a dead stop in 131.4 feet, the shortest stopping distance of this group of trucks.

Exterior/Interior

Overall, judges liked the Colorado’s styling. “Chevy did well on the design,” one judge wrote. Judges liked the smooth and easy operation of the EZ Lift-and-Lower tailgate and the functional features borrowed from the fullsize Silverado like the triple-sealed doors inlaid in the body sides,

which made for a solid seal and contribute to the Colorado’s impressively quiet cabin. The Colorado lost points due to a lack of sheetmetal and body protection. The interior scored very high with the judges. “This is a cabin I want to be in,” wrote a judge. “I feel like Chevy used quality materials where it matters most, where the driver interfaces with the truck. Steering wheel, shifter, stereo, and HVAC knobs,” wrote another. And speaking of the HVAC system, we think the Colorado’s system has one of the most well designed digital/manual interfaces on the market. It’s easy to use with no learning curve. The similarities of the Colorado to GMs fullsize trucks were noted numerous times by judges. “There are definitely cues of this truck trying to be a smaller version of its ½-ton older brother,” a judge wrote. Complaints: Judges felt that the rear seatback was too vertical and several larger-framed judges noted that the front seats felt small.

On-Road

The Colorado’s excellent road manners netted it the highest score in this group of vehicles.

Judges noted the solid feel of the truck and the fact that the coil-over-shock front suspension and electrically-assisted power rack-and-pinion steering helped it handle very well on twisty roads. “This truck handles great,” a judge noted. Overall ride quality was very good as well. There were no complaints about the function and feedback of the electric steering, and this lack of complaining from the judges indicates that GM got it right. Brake pedal feel and overall brake operation was excellent, which we speculate would translate to confident braking when the Colorado is towing its maximum of 7,000 pounds. Judges thought that engine power was adequate but that the V-6 was surprisingly noisy. Judges noted that the six-speed transmission shifted in and out of Overdrive regularly at highway speeds. “In and out of OD a lot,” or something similar, was a common notation from the judges.

Off-Road

While blasting the Colorado down washboard roads, we were impressed at the solid feel of the truck. “Very solid. No rattles or squeaks,” noted one judge. Judges were also impressed at the truck’s abilities in the sand and snow. When the traction control was cancelled, the Colorado came alive in these terrains. “You get tire-spinning freedom, even in two-wheel drive,” noted one judge. Judges also noted the smooth function of the G80 automatic rear locker, and comments included “smooth” and “it works well.” Judges were less enthusiastic about the placement of the four-wheel-drive selector knob, which was low and left of the driver. Judges were also disappointed at the lack of off-road package content. “GM had Hummer in its portfolio at one point. This means the company is capable of making a worthwhile and extremely competent midsized off-roader (H3T Alpha, anyone?),” wrote a judge. The low 17.1-degree approach angle was the Colorado’s biggest off-road hindrance, and it required diligence to keep the front air dam from stuffing into rocks on the trail or trying to act as a plow in sand and snow.

Bottom Line

The Colorado Z71 has a lot going for it. It feels very solid, offers good fuel mileage, great ride quality, decent power, and a very competitive price in its segment. The truck is decently capable in the dirt, even with the low approach angle. This approach angle is one of the reasons why the truck gets good highway fuel mileage though, so it’s a trade-off. We’d love to see GM get serious with the Colorado’s Z71 package and add tougher shocks, body protection, and more aggressive tires. Maybe even a front suspension height increase.

Logbook Quotes

➔ *“I guess we can rejoice that it has a coil-over-shock front suspension (finally, no torsion bars), which should open the suspension up to significant aftermarket potential.”*

➔ *“I’m sure there would be some type of aerodynamic upset, resulting in a fuel economy penalty, but I would ditch the lower valance. It doesn’t look good and hangs too low.”*

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3rd Place

TOYOTA TUNDRA TRD PRO

What's New

The big news for 2015 is that the Tundra is available with the new TRD Pro package. This package fits the Tundra with a variety of items including TRD-tuned high-performance Bilstein piggyback-reservoir shocks. Compared to the non-TRD Pro Tundra, each shock has a larger diameter piston and shaft. The TRD Pro also has TRD-tuned front springs that are said to provide 2 inches of lift and have a decreased spring rate to improve ride quality over harsh terrain. Toyota says that the TRD Pro suspension has 1.4 inches of additional wheel travel up front and 1.5 inches of additional wheel travel in the rear. Other TRD Pro features include 18-inch TRD alloy wheels, Tundra-exclusive Michelin Off-Road Package tires, TRD dual stainless steel exhaust, new TRD front skidplate, unique front grille, special badging (including TRD Pro stamped into the bedsides), multi-reflector halogen headlights with black sport bezels and manual level control, TRD floor mats and shift knob, unique seat color with red stitching, and a unique IP ornament insert.

Ramp and Track

The TRD Pro earned a score of 463 on the 20-degree RTI ramp. This is a healthy 61-point increase over the same wheelbase Tundra SR5 we



WHAT'S HOT:

Power, exhaust sound, soft suspension, great visual appeal

WHAT'S NOT:

Street-type tires, front towhook placement





tested at last year's PTOTY. At the track, the TRD Pro accelerated 0-60 mph in 7.2 seconds and cleared the quarter-mile in 15.6 seconds at 91 mph. These acceleration figures are on par with the numbers generated last year, and they are the fastest in this group of vehicles. The Tundra's four-wheel disc brakes brought the truck to a stop from 60 mph in 140.5 feet.

Exterior/Interior

The all-business appearance of the Tundra gathered praise from the judges. "This is the best looking Tundra so far," wrote one judge. "Sexy," said another. Judges liked the plastic bedrail covers and the 12 hooks in the cargo bed. However, judges questioned the two hard-to-access front towhooks and the lack of body protection on the off-road-centric truck. Inside, judges noted the impressive space with lots of headroom and legroom. "The interior is geared for larger people," noted one judge. "I love the spacious interior," wrote another. The large HVAC controls were easy to use, though the garish silver knobs drew criticism. One judge wrote, "The brushed aluminum knobs look like the ones on my dad's Hi-Fi stereo from 1975." Some judges felt that there were too many finishes inside the cabin. Front seat comfort was good, though the back seat felt cramped to some judges but there was good headroom, though. Overall, the Tundra didn't score well in the Interior category. "Compared to other ½-tons in its class, the Tundra is still a letdown inside. There are some basic controls that we dig, but overall it's not up to par," wrote one judge.

On-Road

The Tundra is a large truck, but it handled very well. The Michelin tires did a great job of gripping canyon roads as we sailed through the curves. The TRD exhaust sounded great. "The exhaust note is just flat-out cool and sounds even better when you romp on it," noted one judge. Another said, "If you like a throaty exhaust, you'll love this." Praise was also centered on the 5.7L V-8 engine and the six-speed automatic transmission. "Engine feels powerful," said a judge. "Fun engine and tranny combo. Lively," said another. The decreased spring rate of the front TRD springs helped contribute to a smooth, comfortable ride on the open road.

Off-Road

If there was ever a question that a suspension could be good on- and off-road, the Tundra TRD Pro proved that it is possible. As good as the suspension was on-road it was just as good off-road.



➔ **"BEST EVER VERSION OF THE TUNDRA SO FAR. SUSPENSION TUNED VERY WELL."**

"Excellent suspension," and "Soft suspension, smooth for an off-road package," were some of the judge's comments. The TRD/Bilstein-equipped suspension soaked up rough terrain, whether it was trail or rutted sand, and this meant our kidneys and tooth fillings stayed in place. It was no surprise that the suspension bottomed out more than others in this test when pushed hard over very rough terrain, but even then, the bumpstops did a good job of providing cushioning. The Tundra was a judge favorite in the sand due to its ample, willing power from the 381hp 5.7L engine. "This thing is a riot to flog in the sand," wrote one tester. As we threw the Tundra through the sand we were serenaded by the incredibly muscular sound from the TRD exhaust. In the rocks, the truck did surprisingly well, aided by the electronic traction

control system. However, all judges questioned the soft, mild-tread Michelin tires that worked well in the snow and sand but suffered chunking and sidewall cuts during testing on rock-strewn trails and hillclimbs.

Bottom Line

The Tundra TRD Pro is a very unique fullsize truck. It has a great look thanks to a number of cool TRD Pro-specific visual mods, outstanding on-road manners, gobs of grumbly power, and it's capable off-road for what most owners will subject it to. The TRD Pro package puts the Tundra in the upper echelon of off-road-ready fullsize OE pickups. With that said, we wish the Tundra TRD Pro had more aggressive tires, additional underbody skidplating, and a locker or limited-slip rear diff.

Logbook Quotes

➔ "The suspension feels very supple and smooth on-road. It doesn't feel like something you would get from the factory. In fact, it feels like a nice aftermarket suspension, which is a good thing."

➔ "It's great to see Toyota caring about the off-road market and creating a platform like this. Sure, there are things I don't like, but it should be noted that they put forth an effort. It's not a Raptor effort by any stretch, but an effort nevertheless."

2nd Place

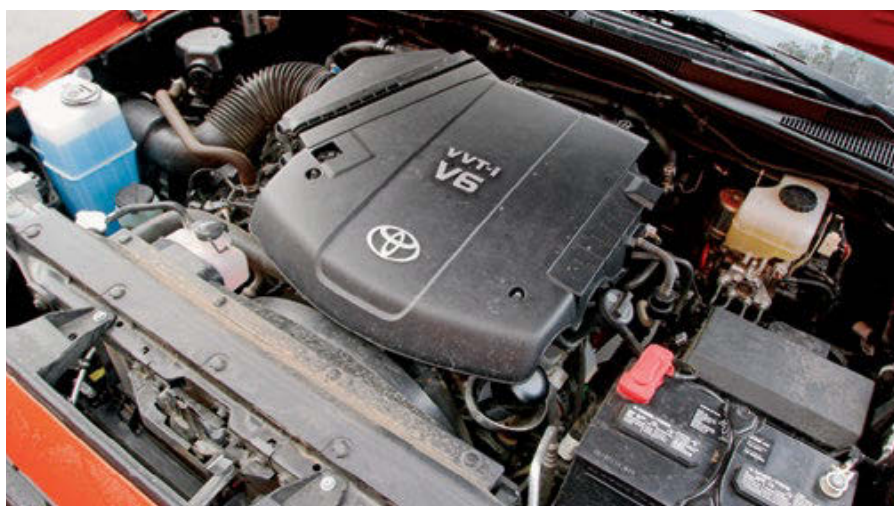
TOYOTA TACOMA TRD PRO

What's New

The new TRD Pro package fits the Tacoma with a variety of items including TRD-tuned high-performance Bilstein shocks. Compared to the non-TRD Pro Tacoma, each front shock has a larger diameter piston and shaft and each remote-reservoir rear shock has a larger piston. The TRD Pro also has TRD-tuned front springs that provide a 1¾-inch lift and are said to have a decreased spring rate to improve ride quality over harsh terrain. Toyota says that the TRD Pro suspension has ¾-inch additional wheel travel up front and 1½ inches of additional wheel travel in the rear. Other TRD Pro features include new 16-inch TRD alloy beadlock-style wheels, BFGoodrich All-Terrain T/A KO tires, black OE skidplate, TRD after-cat exhaust, unique front grille, black TRD Pro and Toyota badging, TRD floor mats, and a TRD shift knob.

Ramp and Track

The TRD Pro suspension helped the Tacoma earn an impressive score of 473 points on the 20-degree RTI ramp. This is a remarkable 93-point improvement over the same wheelbase Tacoma TRD TIX Baja Access Cab we tested at PTOTY 2013. At the track, the Tacoma's 236hp 4.0L engine pulled the truck from a dead stop to 60 mph in 8.3 seconds and through the quarter-mile in 16.5 seconds at 84.3 mph. These performance numbers are almost identical to the numbers generated by the Tacoma TRD TIX Baja



WHAT'S HOT:

Great stance, improved wheel travel, front suspension lift, TRD/Bilstein shocks, great clearances, impressive power at high rpms

WHAT'S NOT:

Can't completely cancel traction control, slow 4WD engagement, dated interior, interior noise at speed





➤“THIS TRUCK LOVES SPEED. THE MORE OF IT THE BETTER (OFF-ROAD).”

Access Cab we tested in 2013. The disc/drum brakes brought the TRD Pro to a dead stop from 60 mph in 138.9 feet, which is an improvement of almost 5 feet compared to the TRD TIX Baja we tested previously.

Exterior/Interior

Overall, judges gave the exterior of the Tacoma good marks. “Great stance,” wrote one judge. Another said, “The most visually appealing Tacoma to date, in my opinion.” Judges liked the chrome-free exterior and the TRD Pro-specific items like the black badging, grille, and front skidplate. Judges didn’t care for the low-hanging mud flaps (which miraculously stayed attached even after a week of wheeling) and some judges were bothered by the slight nose-high stance of the TRD Pro. The interior scored the lowest of this group, with comments like “Very outdated and old-feeling,” and “dated” being the norm. Judges also noted that the cabin was noisier at speed than some of the more recently designed trucks. However, age aside, the interior is very functional with no learning curve and lots of hidden storage areas. Judges also liked the fold-flat rear seats



and the power outlet in the cargo bed. The shortest judge found visibility from the driver seat to be a problem. “The Toyotas in this test sit nose-high, which is annoying. The fact that you can’t adjust the seat any better in this truck makes it that much worse,” he complained. However, taller judges had no problem and several noted the great visibility from the driver seat.

Logbook Quotes

- “If you drive it hard, you’ll be rewarded with power.”
- “A-Trac is terrible. Make it go away. A front locker would make this truck a real contender.”
- “Despite the electronic nannies, you can have fun cutting loose off-road.”
- “Overall, the suspension is way too stiff and makes for a somewhat unpleasant ride quality off-road. That’s why I scored it lower for rocky trails and sand.”

On-Road

Judges expressed mixed emotions on the Tacoma’s on-road handling. Some felt that the steering was slow to respond and that the brakes were touchy past 1-inch of pedal travel. Overall, judges felt it was fun to drive though. “Very sport truck-like, fun to drive,” wrote one judge. “It was surprisingly tossable on twisty canyon roads,” wrote another judge. The V-6 engine’s power comes on strong in the higher rpms, and the engine worked well with the five-speed automatic transmission. Judges noted the lack of throttle delay, which made power roll-on almost instantaneous, unlike some vehicles we’ve tested where there’s a distinct delay in power delivery. The TRD Pro’s ride was a bit harsh on rough roads at low speed, but the suspension was in its element on rough roads at speed. The TRD after-cat exhaust emitted a bold exhaust note, which was clearly obvious from the cab. “If you don’t like loud exhaust, this is not the truck for you. But it sounds cool in a sport truck sorta way,” noted one judge.

Off-Road

The TRD Pro was in its element off-road. The truck’s great approach, departure, rampover, and ground clearance meant it was one of the judge’s favorite rigs. The TRD Pro suspension owned rough terrain at speed, and we were able to blast along without a care. In the rocks, the truck did great thanks to the enhanced suspension travel, awesome clearances, and the electronically controlled locking rear differential. In the snow and sand, we were able to romp the truck up to a point before the traction control took over. We appreciated the front towhook and front towloop. Complaints: As it was on-road, the suspension was stiff at low speed on rough terrain, which made for a harsh ride; the traction control was often overactive and can’t be completely canceled; and four-wheel-drive engagement was a tad slow.

Bottom Line

We think the Tacoma TRD Pro is the best Tacoma yet for those who want a smaller pickup with big off-road capability, and we think it’s possibly the most capable small pickup available in the U.S. today. If we had a wish list, we’d add a front diff locker and a manual shift T-case, but even without those items, this truck is ready and willing to hit the trail. The new TRD Pro package includes a well thought out group of mods that combine to make this truck very off-road capable and a lot of fun.

Winner!

RAM POWER WAGON

What's New

For 2014, the Ram Power Wagon received a number of new items, which qualified the truck for competition, but Ram was unable to provide a vehicle last year due to manufacturing schedules. So, the 2014 model was included in this year's competition (the '15 Power Wagon, which includes a new hill descent control feature, was unavailable by our test dates). The '14 Power Wagon, based on the Ram 2500 Heavy Duty Crew Cab, has many new features including an all-new suspension system. It includes Power Wagon-specific Bilstein shocks, control arms, spring rates, and more than 2 inches of lift. Up front, the truck has a "Ram Articulin" three-link setup, while out back it uses a five-link coil-spring suspension. The Power Wagon continues to feature the front electronic disconnecting sway bar. The truck also continues to use solid axles front and rear that are equipped with electronic locking differentials, but for 2014, the front axle uses an axle disconnect system that is said to improve fuel economy by up to one mpg. Under the hood is a new 6.4L Hemi V-8 engine that produces 410 hp and 429 lb-ft of torque. The engine features Fuel Saver cylinder deactivation technology,

cooled exhaust gas recirculation, variable valve timing, a high-volume oil cooler, oil jets for piston cooling, and aircraft-grade stainless steel gaskets and fasteners for improved durability at high temperatures. Power is routed through a six-speed automatic transmission and sent to the axles via a part-time, manual-engagement transfer case.

Ramp and Track

With the front swaybar connected, the Power Wagon earned a score of 405 points on the 20-degree ramp. As expected, disconnecting the front sway bar improved that number dramatically. With the sway bar disconnected, the truck earned a score of 509 points, which was the best of this group of trucks. At the track, the Power Wagon traveled from 0-60 mph in 9.5 seconds and through the quarter-mile in 17.2 seconds at 84.5 mph. Interestingly, these acceleration numbers are slower than those generated by the 5.7L Power Wagon we tested at PTOTY 2012. The Power Wagon's four-wheel disc brakes with ABS helped bring the approximately 6,700-pound truck to a stop from 60 mph in 137.5 feet, which is an improvement of over 20 feet compared to the '12 Power Wagon we tested.

Exterior/Interior

From a functional perspective, we like that the 12,000-pound Warn winch is tucked inconspicuously behind the front bumper but is still easy to use. Ram has tried various badging formats since the Power Wagon's reintroduction in 2005, and this model is only badged as a Power Wagon on the tailgate. Judges liked this format better than the garish badging like what was found on the '12 model, but we think the Power Wagon and Ram's Black package are the ultimate

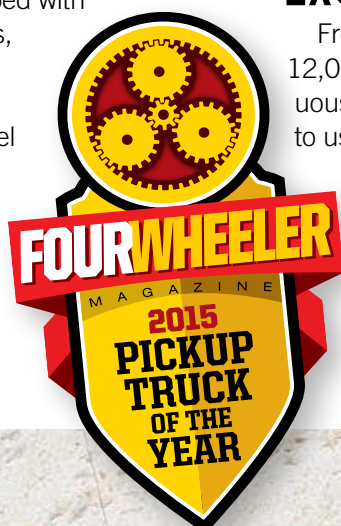
all-business exterior matchup we'd like to see. Judges had to nitpick just to find anything wrong with the exterior. "I wish it had rocker protection like the '05 Power Wagon," wrote one judge. A couple of judges noted that the tall truck actually makes the 33-inch tires look small. "I wish it had 35s," was a common notation in the judge's books, not only for aesthetics, but also for the functional aspect. Inside, the Ram also gathered positive comments. "Not goofy, gimmicky, or over the top. Utilitarian luxury," commented one judge regarding our tester's Laramie-trimmed cabin. Another said, "I love the Ram interior. Soft touch. Leather. Quality materials." Laramie trim notwithstanding, the interior's basic design was a winner with the judges, who gave kudos to the center-mounted transfer case lever, front seat headroom and legroom, seat design and adjustability, storage options, instrumentation, controls, and the ability to have a flat load floor in the rear passenger area when the seats are folded. Oh, and there were a lot of cupholders. "I don't think I even own enough cups to fill all of the cupholders," noted one judge. Judges also liked the RamBox and its functionality, as well as the fact that the RamBox locks functioned with the truck's remote key fob. "Super nice interior with really clever rear cargo arrangement," wrote one judge. Complaints were minimal with the most mentioned being rear seat headroom seemed limited for taller passengers.

WHAT'S HOT:

Locking diffs, 12,000-pound Warn winch, disconnecting front sway bar, manual shift transfer case, suspension lift, road manners, trail capability

WHAT'S NOT:

Throttle lag, fuel economy



➔"POWER WAGON IS WHAT A TRUCK SHOULD BE."



Logbook Quotes

“You can really rail the huge Power Wagon on twisty roads, which is amazing for a 6,700-pound truck. Does not push into hard corners as much as you think it would.”

“There’s virtually no obstacle that can stop this beast.”

“This truck represents exactly what a truck should be. Something that can haul, tow, and wheel through any terrain or obstacle imaginable.”

“This truck checked all of the want boxes. With selectable lockers, an in-cab disconnecting sway bar, winch, and great suspension, it is the oversized Wrangler for those who think Jeeps are for Barbie.”



On-Road

The Power Wagon was surprisingly civilized on the road for a $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton truck, even when pushed through curvy canyon roads. “It’s amazing how well it goes around corners on mountain roads,” noted one judge. In an age where some believe it takes IFS and electric steering to help make a full-size pickup truck handle well, the Power Wagon shows that a large, solid axle truck with “old school” power recirculating-ball steering can hold its own in the handling department. Judges liked the feel and effectiveness of the Power Wagon’s four-wheel disc brakes when it came time to scrub speed. Comments like “solid pedal” and “great brakes” were noted. The ride quality was also noted often, and the judges agreed that the ride was great on the road for a $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton truck. Judges noted increased road noise from the Goodyear Wrangler DuraTrac tires compared to the BFGoodrich All-Terrain T/A KO tires that were on the ’12 Power Wagon. The DuraTracs worked well though. The 6.4L engine’s output is 27 hp and 29 lb-ft of torque more than the 5.7L ’12 Power Wagon, and that power increase is welcome but it didn’t wow the judges. Comments included, “Engine makes good power but not sporty enough for the nature of this truck,” and “The 6.4L is still nothing to write home about.” The solution according to one judge? “This is when we insert the 5-millionth notation about wanting, needing, having to have a diesel version.”

Off-Road

Quite simply, the Power Wagon ruled all off-road terrain. It effortlessly navigated everything



we threw at it. No obstacle fazed it. On graded roads at speed, the coil spring suspension helped to make the truck “surefooted” and “smooth for a $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton.” The big truck easily crawled rocky trails thanks to the softened throttle response and slightly increased engine idle speed that kicks in when the truck is in 4-Lo; the outstanding ground clearance, approach, and departure angles; differential lockers; and flexy suspension. These items also helped the truck effortlessly ascend our nasty, uneven, loose-dirt hillclimb. In the snow, the Power Wagon was unstoppable with its impressive clearances and lockers. Even in the sand, the Power Wagon worked very well, though throttle response from the engine while romping in the sand and snow was criticized by each judge. One judge summarized it by saying, “Throttle response is very slow. You have to plan ahead when you want to throttle aggressively.” This is the only negative we found with the Power

Wagon’s off-road performance. Judges loved the simple and easy-to-use floor-mounted manual T-case shifter (“Shifter on the floor is king!”), easy-to-access huge front towloops (“Not since Hummer have there been towloops this easy to use.”), and generous underbody protection (“Overkill, considering how much ground clearance this truck has.”). The front disconnecting swaybar worked flawlessly as did the differential lockers.

Bottom Line

The Power Wagon easily won this year’s competition, and it isn’t the first time the Power Wagon nameplate has been on the winner’s podium. This is the fifth win for the nameplate since we first started hosting these competitions in 1974, and the fourth since the Power Wagon was reintroduced in 2005. The ’14 Power Wagon is mega functional and is arguably the most multi-faceted, capable fullsize pickup available today. It’s a truck that can carry you to a five-star restaurant in style, haul you down the gnarliest trails, or easily tow a heavy trailer and cargo. Our tester was on the upper end of the price spectrum, but Ram offers the Power Wagon in other trim levels, including the entry-level Tradesman. Base price for the ’15 Power Wagon Tradesman is approximately \$45K according to the Ram website at time of print. The Power Wagon has again proved itself to be an outstanding truck that excels both on- and off-road, and for this reason, it’s our 2015 Pickup Truck of the Year.

How We Test 'Em

On the first day of our weeklong Pickup Truck of the Year test we traveled to Willow Springs International Raceway, near Lancaster, California, where we used a RaceLogic Performance Box to gather acceleration and braking data. We then convoyed to the desert via winding paved roads and, along the way, gathered data on how the trucks handled in the twisty environment. For the next three days we tested the trucks in a wide range of terrain. We spent time in almost every type of driving situation you may encounter. From stop-and-go city driving to wide open highway. Since we're an off-road-centric publication, we spent the majority of time in the dirt, water, mud, sand, and rocks. Each day of driving began shortly after sunup and ended well after sundown. We traveled to both high and low altitudes, we drove in the dark, and this year, for the first time in recent OTY history, we were able to test in snow at high elevation. On the last day, we made the trek back to the Los Angeles area, which completed the test. In the end, we logged about 900 miles on each vehicle.



How We Score 'Em

Our scoring procedure utilizes five weighted categories. Here's the breakdown: 30 percent Trail Performance (how a vehicle performs in specific wheeling environments and off-road-centric features like 4WD system operation, tires, traction aids, and so on), 25 percent Empirical (RTI, acceleration, braking, price, and so on), 20 percent On Pavement (handling, ride quality, steering feel, and so on) 15 percent Interior (instrumentation, ingress and egress, seat comfort, storage, and so on), and 10 percent Exterior (appearance, stance, body protection, and so on).



Final Results

	Colorado Z71	Power Wagon	Tacoma TRD Pro	Tundra TRD Pro
Trail Performance	16.62	26.08	20.44	19.02
Empirical	20.36	22.14	21.07	21.43
On-Road Performance	13.54	13.23	12.14	12.80
Interior	9.84	12.51	8.81	9.70
Exterior	6.22	8.29	7.12	6.27
Total	66.58	82.25	69.58	69.22

Judges Picks

Scoring gets thrown out the window here. We asked the judges which vehicle they'd most like to own, and why, based on their own personal wheeling style and preference. Here's what they chose.

Ken Brubaker, *Four Wheeler* Senior Editor

The **Toyota Tacoma TRD Pro** was a hoot to drive, and it's the truck I'd like to own out of this group. I dig how well all of the TRD Pro-specific upgrades work together to make the truck capable and fun both on- and off-road. As a bonus, it's rated at 21-mpg highway, and it's one of the least expensive trucks in this group. I think the truck is a great value. I really like the truck's stance, too.

Ali Mansour, *Jp* Technical Editor

This is a tough one. All of the trucks this year had extreme highs and lows in my book. The easy answer is the **Power Wagon**. It checks all the right boxes for what I would want in a fullsize truck that I actually take off-road. I don't find the 6.4L Hemi all that impressive, but it gets the job done without too much fuss. While I don't consider any of the trucks in the competition dirt cheap, the Ram does stick out as extra pricey. Don't get me wrong, it's a super nice truck, but it would make me second guess how serious I was about getting into more challenging terrain off-road.

Greg Smith, *Four Wheeler* Art Director

The Tundra was a blast to drive, especially in the sand, due to its really responsive and powerful engine, but overall I have to go with the **Power Wagon** as my take-home truck. It truly is the do-it-all truck that sets the benchmark in the truck market. The only downside is the fuel economy and of course, the hit to the wallet, but with this much truck, I can overlook that.

Agustin Jimenez, *TEN* Staff Editor

The **Power Wagon** is a no-brainer in my book. It's not to say the competition is lacking, which to be honest is pretty fierce this year. I'd welcome the Ram 2500 Power Wagon into my stable because every off-road enthusiast worth his or her salt should own a good ¾-ton 4x4 truck. The ride quality is pretty smooth for a big ¾-ton truck. If you venture off the beaten path, you never have to worry about getting it stuck in any terrain you might ever encounter. While fuel economy leaves much to be desired, it's not a deal breaker by any means. Especially since fuel prices are currently floating around \$2.85 in SoCal, which means I'd hightail it to the desert towing

my prerunner in the lap of luxury. The winch is just the icing on the cake!

John Cappa, Contributor

I really enjoyed the solid chassis and maneuverability of the Chevy Colorado Z71 and the sporty feel of the Toyota Tacoma TRD Pro. But at the end of the day, I have to go with the most capable pickup ever offered: the **Ram Power Wagon**. It's a tow rig, work truck, and off-road toy all rolled into one.

Cody Kanuscak, Contributor

I would love to take the **Ram Power Wagon** home since it has all the features that I would install on a truck, including a Warn winch, front and rear differential locks, electronic disconnect sway bar, and forged aluminum wheels. It's equipped with a 6.4L powerplant so I can tow my friends wheeling rigs to the trail, then lead the trail with the Ram Power Wagon.





WE ARE GRIT AND DIRT
AND BITS OF EARTH.

OPEN COUNTRY

Durability in the Shape of a Tire.

Specifications As Tested

GENERAL			
Vehicle/model	2015 Chevy Colorado Crew Cab Z71	2014 Ram Power Wagon Crew Cab	2015 Toyota Tacoma Double Cab TRD Pro
Base price	\$34,115	\$47,370	\$37,415
Price as tested	\$36,710	\$59,580	\$38,300
Options as tested	Audio System-Premium BOSE (\$500), Chevrolet Mylink Audio System w/8in Diagonal Color Touch & Navigation (\$495), Bedliner, Spray On (\$475), Trailing Equipment Package (\$250), Destination Charge (\$875)	Customer Preferred Package 22J (\$7,450), 220-Amp Alternator (\$100), Power Sunroof (\$995), Uconnect 8.4AN AM/FM/BT/ACCESS/NAV (\$500), Remote Start System (\$200), RamBox Cargo Management System (\$1,295), Spray-In Bedliner (\$475), Destination Charge (\$1,195)	None, Destination Charge (\$885)
ENGINE			
Type	DOHC 24-valve V-6	16-valve pushrod V-8 w/VVT	DOHC 24-valve V-6 w/VVT
Displacement (ci/liter)	217/3.6	392/6.4	241/4.0
Bore x stroke (in)	3.70 x 3.37	4.09 x 3.72	3.70 x 3.74
Compression ratio (:1)	11.5	10.0	10.0
Intake/FI	Direct injection	Sequential, multiport, electronic	EFI
Mfg.'s power rating @ rpm (hp)	305 @ 6,800	410 @ 5,600	236 @ 5,200
Mfg.'s torque rating @ rpm (lb-ft)	269 @ 4,000	429 @ 4,000	266 @ 4,000
Mfg.'s suggested fuel type	Regular Unleaded	Regular Unleaded	87 octane or higher
DRIVETRAIN			
Transmission	Hydra-Matic 6L50 6-spd automatic	66RFE 6-spd automatic	Aisin AB60F 5-spd automatic
Ratios (:1)	1st 4.06, 2nd 2.37, 3rd 1.55, 4th 1.16, 5th 0.85, 6th 0.67, Reverse 4.44	1st 3.23 , 2nd 1.84, 3rd 1.41, 4th 1.00, 5th 0.82, 6th 0.63, Reverse 4.44	1st 3.52 , 2nd 2.04, 3rd 1.40, 4th 1.00, 5th 0.72, Reverse 3.22
Axle ratio (:1)	3.42	4.10	3.73
Transfer case (:1)	Magna NQ7 2-spd, electric-shift	BorgWarner 44-47 2-spd, manual shift	Aisin VF28M 2-spd, electric shift
Low-range ratio (:1)	2.72	2.64	2.57
Crawl ratio (:1)	37.8	35	33.7
FRAME/BODY			
Frame	Steel ladder-type	Steel, ladder-type	Steel ladder-type
Body	Steel, aluminum	Steel	Steel
SUSPENSION/AXLES			
Front	Independent coil-over-shock w/twin-tube shocks/Dana, 7.5-inch ring gear	Three-link, coil springs/AAM, 9.25-inch ring gear, Tru-Lok electric locker	Independent, TRD-tuned springs, TRD-tuned Bilstein shocks/Hino, 8-inch ring gear
Rear	Semi-elliptic two-stage multi-leaf springs, twin-tube shocks/Dana, 8.7-inch ring gear, G80 locking differential	Five-link, coil springs/AAM, 11.5-inch ring gear, Tru-Lok electric locker	Leaf springs, TRD-tuned piggyback remote-reservoir shocks/Hino, 8-inch ring gear, automatic limited-slip differential
STEERING			
Type	Electrically-assisted power rack-and-pinion w/variable assist	Power recirculating ball	Power rack-and-pinion
Turns (lock-to-lock)	3.3	3.33	3.64
Ratio (:1)	16.8	15.6	17.3
BRAKES			
Front	12.20 x 1.00-inch disc, Four-piston caliper	14 x 1.7-inch disc, twin-piston caliper	12.48-inch vented disc, Four-piston caliper
Rear	12.75 x 0.70-inch disc, TK-piston caliper	14.09 x 1.34-inch disc, twin-piston caliper	10.0-inch drum
ABS	Four-wheel	Four-wheel	Four-wheel
WHEELS/TIRES			
Wheels (in)	17 x 8 cast aluminum	17 x 8 aluminum	16 x 7 alloy
Tires	P255/65R17 Goodyear Wrangler All-Terrain Adventure	LT285/70R17 Goodyear Wrangler DuraTrac	P265/70R16 BFGoodrich All-Terrain T/A KO
FUEL ECONOMY			
EPA city/highway	17/24	N/A	16/21
Observed city/highway/trail	15.6	10.2	14.4
DIMENSIONS/CAPACITIES			
Weight (lb)	4,450	6,700	4,220
Wheelbase (in)	128.3	149.3	127.4
Overall length (in)	212.7	237.3	208.1
Overall width (in)	74.3	79.1	74.6
Height (in)	70.6	81.0	70.1
Track f/r (in)	62.4/62.4	68.6/68.0	63.0/63.4
Minimum ground clearance (in)	8.2	8.3	9.3
Turning diameter, curb-to-curb (ft)	41.3	47.7	40.7
Approach/departure angles (deg)	17.3/22.1	33.6/26.2	37.8/25
Breakover angle (deg)	19.8	23.5	20
GVWR (lb)	6,000	8,510	5,500
Payload (lb)	1,590	1,490	1,280
Maximum towing capacity (lb)	7,000	10,810	3,500
Seating	5	5	5
Fuel capacity (gal)	21	31	21.1
PERFORMANCE			
0-60 mph (sec)	8.6	9.5	8.3
Quarter-mile (sec @ mph)	16.6 @ 86.2	17.2 @ 84.5	16.5 @ 84.3
Braking 60-0 mph (ft)	131.4	137.5	138.9
Ramp Travel Index (20-degree, points)	429	405 sway bar connected, 509 sway bar disconnected	473

2015 Toyota Tundra CrewMax TRD Pro

\$43,900

\$45,000

None, Destination Charge (\$1,100)

DOHC 32-valve V-8

345/5.7

3.70 x 4.02

10.2

EFI

381 @ 5,600

401 @ 3,600

87 octane or higher

Aisin A750F 6-spd automatic

1st 3.33 , **2nd** 1.96, **3rd** 1.35, **4th** 1.00,

5th 0.73, **6th** 0.59, **Reverse** 3.06

4.30

BorgWarner WF1AM 2-spd, electronic shift

2.64

37.8

Steel, ladder-type

Steel

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18.1

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18 x 8 cast-aluminum alloy

P275/65R18 Michelin LTX A/T

13/17

12.2

5,625

145.7

228.9

79.9

76.2

67.9/67.9

10.6

44

26/22

19.1

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5

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15.6 @ 91

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463 **FW**

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A VISIT TO MY GRANDMOTHER'S house a few hours away in southern New Hampshire almost always included a ride in her early '80s Jeep Wagoneer. Not with my grandmother, mind you, but with my father, who—in retrospect—was looking for any excuse he could fabricate to part company with his mother-in-law. Roaming the backroads in search of peace, quiet, and nag-free solitude seemed to be the goal, but, unfortunately for him, there'd be none of that with me tagging along.

Not wanting to bring gram's Wagoneer back with clumps of mud dropping out of the frame-rails, we stuck mostly to dirt roads. In an effort to shut me up (and to keep me from spotting the actual 4WD trails that littered this part of the state), dad expertly sold these scenic and impeccably maintained backroads to me as challenging off-road expeditions—or so he thought. Even at an unsuspecting 6 or 7 years of age, I never did fall for his bait-n-switch attempts and mostly spent these rides wondering where all the fun-looking trails led to that we kept rolling on past. As a lingering consequence, to this day I still want to explore anything that even remotely resembles a passable trail, especially if there's the possibility of mud on the menu.

Older now, my dirty habits are still proving tough to kick. Besides, if you're wheelin' in mud country, you might as well settle in and enjoy the slop—there's no avoiding it. With a magnetic-draw to unexplored backcountry, you tend to learn what works well

and what characteristics make for a good mud tire. The super-aggressive offerings are obvious, but almost always carry horrible street manners as a drawback. Finding a tire that doesn't punish you on the pavement, but does what the sidewall lettering says it will off-road, is what it's all about for most people, and this is the ultra-competitive segment that

tires like the Dick Cepek Mud Country is fighting for a spot in.

Honestly, never having tried them before, we weren't expecting anything better than average performance from the 35x12.50R15 Dick Cepek Mud

G For whatever reason, the Mud Country was a tire that hadn't registered strongly on our radar up until now but probably should have. Stepped tread blocks to assist in mud ejection and even wear, and in our experience, they do their job well. Molded into the three-ply sidewall are the signature "DC" tread blocks, both for added protection and a little extra grip to help claw your way up 'n out of ruts. The contact patches are also siped, which should help give a little extra grip on icy roads over the winter.



Dick Cepek tires in their native environment

By Ben Battles editor@fourwheeler.com Photography: Ben Battles

MUD COUNTRY TEST IN MUD COUNTRY



1. We could go either way on the simulated beadlock bolts, but what we do dig about the Summit Nomad Diamond Cut Wheels are their simplistic styling, perfect 3¾-inch backspacing for our Jeep Wrangler, and super-reasonable price. The finish combines a gray-painted center with a clear-coated outer ring, and so far, it's holding up great.



2. Always a good indicator of mold-quality, our Mud Country tires took very little weight to balance. In fact, we can't ever remember balancing a set of 35s that only took between a ½ and 2 ounces of weight per tire and wheel combination. As a result, we have zero shake or shimmy rolling down the road, no matter what the speed.

3. Northeast mud comes in more flavors than Ben & Jerry's, except

without a label, so you never really know what you're gonna get 'til you dip your tires in. In an effort to get the tread voids hopelessly packed solid, we purposely found the stickiest, thickest mud we could and went in tires a-bla-zin'. What we found was that the Mud Country had an above-average ability to eject this glue-like mud and present a clean biting surface on their way back around. For a radial mud-terrain, we were impressed.

4. With performance reminiscent of a trials-bike tire mounted on a dirtbike, the Mud Country gripped well to wet, slimy rocks, roots, and any other ground feature that wasn't conducive to good traction. On this particular trail run—where there were no shortage of opportunities to open up the sidewalls like a can of tuna fish—no flats were experienced.



Country you see here. However, after a few off-road outings and a little over 10,000 on-road miles, we are favorably impressed. This particular Jeep has seen a total of three other brands of radial mud-terrains over the past 140,000 miles or so, all in the same 35-inch size. Not only have the Mud Country tires proven the quietest rolling, best riding, and best handling tire of the bunch on road, they've also been the best-performing tire off-road to boot. A bold statement for sure, but while measurable, these performance differences were not vast. Nevertheless, they were measurable.

As is typical among manufacturers, our 35-inch tire measured a little less than advertised at just over 34-inches in diameter. Being a load-range "C" tire, they were a good match to our Wrangler's weight and offered good shock absorption on small compression



bumps. Sidewalls are three-ply; two of which are running vertically, and the third cross-ways in an effort aimed at stability. The Mud Country tread layout features stepped, asymmetrical tread blocks with no shortage of biting edges, and these highly varied lug shapes all but ensure you've got the right biting-edge for the job. Cepek claims that the lug's stepped "ledges" assist in self-cleaning, and we can verify those claims. As soon as the tires were spun up to the appropriate velocity, they ejected the stickiest mud we could find with relative ease. Of course, the gaping voids between the lugs (less in the center, more on the outer edges) didn't detract from these efforts either. The tread's contact patch is also siped for a little extra grab on smooth surfaces, and more importantly for us northerners, snow- and ice-covered roads over the winter.

Good off-road performance is oftentimes met with sometimes-significant compromises in on-road performance, but this didn't happen to be the case with the Mud Country. Even with their gaping tread voids, these tires rolled smooth and quiet at all speeds. Mid-corner bumps were handled in a smooth and predictable fashion, and unlike some of the other tires we've tried on this Jeep, you always felt in control of steering input. For a mud-terrain, they get an A+ for their pavement performance. After 10,000 miles, tire wear is noticeable (as to be expected) but not uneven.

For testing, we mounted our



5

new tires up on a set of aluminum 15x8 Summit Racing Nomad Diamond Cut Wheels with 3¾-inches of backspacing. The wheels look great and strike an even balance between bling and utility in the aesthetics department. They're also pretty reasonably priced, at just over \$100 per wheel.

In the end, it's easy to get wrapped up in the superfluous advertising campaigns of some of the top tire manufacturers to the point where some of the less-loudly-spoken manufacturers are relegated to the shadows of your purchasing decisions. If nothing else, our experiences here with the Dick Cepek tires have reminded us that thinking outside of the rock-star-endorsed product-category box can sometimes have you stumbling across outstanding products. This tire is one of those products.

SOURCES

Dick Cepek
330/928-9092, dickcepek.com

Summit Racing
800/230-3030, summitracing.com

5. With a rare early November snowfall here in the Northeast, we had an opportunity to test the Mud Country in a 12-inch-plus layer of fresh white stuff. The same attributes that make these tires perform well in mud also carry over here, and traction never seemed to be at a deficit. On hard-packed snow and icy roads, they performed as well as you can expect any mud-terrain to (that is to say, marginal), but an all-terrain will almost always be a better choice here.

6. In this case, we found that good on-road behavior also translated to good hard-pack-dirt performance. The Mud Country grabbed traction extremely well, and launched the Jeep with minimal spin. Bearing down on the skinny pedal around corners gave predictable handling and slide characteristics. We'd have no reservations about pushing this Jeep to near rally-car speeds on our local logging/tote roads while wearing these tires.

7. Most of our off-road testing was done with the tires aired down to 15 psi. Losing a bead due to overly low pressure is never fun, so we err on the side of caution with any non-beadlocked wheel. Even at this relatively high off-road pressure, the tires still provided a noticeable tread-conforming bulge. If given the



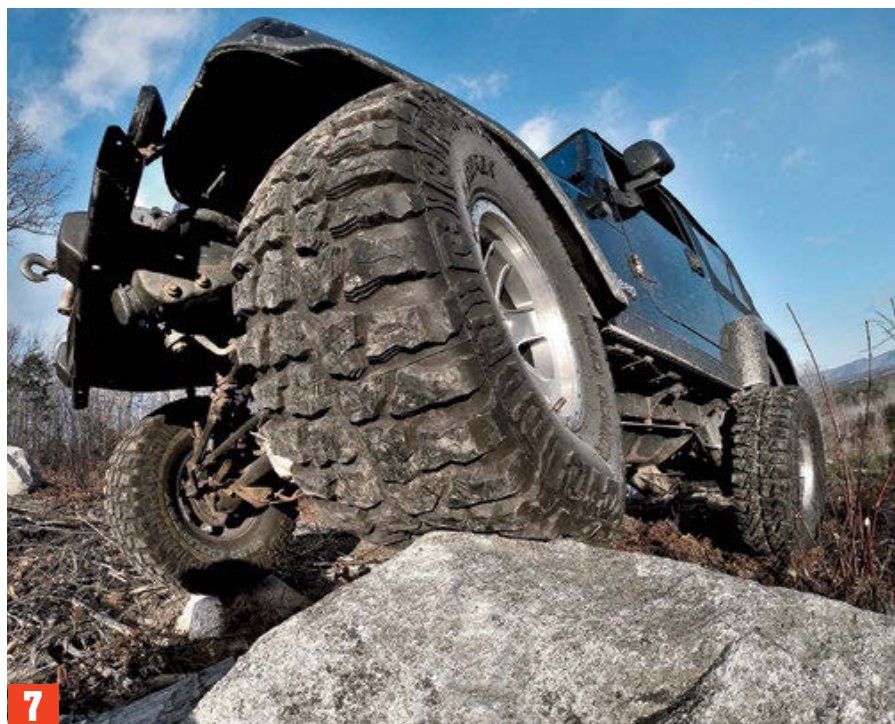
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chance, we'd love to see what these tires are capable of at even lower pressures when mounted up on a beadlock.

8. The biggest surprise came with the Mud Country's non-typical on-road behavior. Overall stability was excellent at all speeds, and tire noise? Not much at all. In fact, there was a noticeable reduction in noise and vibration compared to the three other brands of radial mud-terrains this Jeep wore. We have over 10,000-miles under our belts with the Cepeks so far, and to date, tire wear has been consistent with other mud-terrain offerings. **FW**

SPECIFICATIONS

Tire: Dick Cepek Mud Country
Size: 35x12.50R15
Type: Radial
Load range: C
Max load (lbs): 2,535
Sidewall construction: Three-ply polyester
Tread construction: One-ply nylon, two-ply steel, three-ply polyester
Approved rim width (in): 8.5-10
Tread depth (in): 19.5/32
Tread width (in): 10
Section width (in): 12.2
Overall diameter (in): 34.8
Maximum psi: 35
Weight (lbs): 66



7



8

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All-terrain and then some

By **Christian Hazel** christian.hazel@fourwheeler.com Photography: Christian Hazel

MICKEY THOMPSON, NOT MICKEY MOUSE

SOMETIMES YOU GET LUCKY and stumble into a wheel and tire combo that just clicks for you and your vehicle. The stars shine, stormy seas part, angels sing, and killer traction is yours in every terrain you and your 4x4 frequent. They roll smooth, quiet, and round on the street with no funky tread-wear, and they look good to boot. That was the perfect combo we broke up in order to test Mickey Thompson's new Baja ATZP3 on our '89 Wrangler. Indeed, it was

with more than a little trepidation that we drove our Wrangler to our local Discount Tire store to have our trusty old 31s removed and a quintet of 31x10.50R15LT Mickey Thompson ATZP3s mounted and balanced. However, within the first mile leaving Discount Tire, our fears subsided. And once we got 100 feet down our first trail with the new ATZP3s, we knew we had traded up. Click.

Mickey Thompson claims the ATZP3 is a hybrid design intended to fill the gap between

all-terrain and mud-terrain tires. Sure, the voids aren't huge like a mud-terrain tire, but the tread has "multi-draft" grooves to aid self-cleaning and extended side-wall tread reminiscent of Mickey Thompson's beloved polyester and fiberglass Baja Belted tires so we got cocky. Some rare So-Cal desert rain allowed us to test the limits of the design's mojo in the muddy, alluvial soil near the Salton Sea. When this dirt gets wet, it takes on a taffy-like consistency and sticks to itself. The

end result was the tread blocks struggled to clear themselves and we wound up driving around on huge mud donuts. But based on previous experience in these conditions, the same thing happens to aggressive purpose-built tires like a Swamper TSL or Krawler, so no real lessons learned there other than hammer down every now and then to spin the tires enough to eject mud with centrifugal force.

Having confirmed the obvious—that gnarly mud ain't the



ATZP3's thing—we moved on to other terrain. For starters, if all you do is rockcrawl and scoot across hard-packed dirt, you really should be looking hard at this tire. At 8 psi, they flat out stick like glue. It's partially in the tread design (lots of little siped tread blocks like a trials bike tire), but it's also in the tread compound. In addition to providing very good grip on all kinds of rock from sandstone to slick granite, the new T4 compound is more chip and puncture resistant than previous offerings. Even after some severely rough riding over shale, broken granite, and other tire shredding terrain, we were very impressed to

see our tread blocks and sidewalls virtually unmarred. We've put other tire types through this same wringer, only to have them come out looking like we did a burnout on top of a huge cheese grater. The T4 compound must be pretty good stuff.

In looser soil, like gravelly hillclimbs and sandy washes, we noted some wheelhop and chatter with the tires at our self-imposed 28-psi street pressure. That said, dropping the pressure for our 3,000-pound four-cylinder Wrangler to 14 psi was all it took to allow the underpowered Jeep to scoot up hill and over dale like some amped-up cartoon charac-

ter who still said corny stuff like "hill and dale." The tread didn't pack with looser soil, and even when brush busting on a buddy's property, we had no issues with sharp sticks or tree limbs. The ATZP3s proved tough little buggers to the point we began to consider our spare superfluous cargo. On dirt roads back at our street pressure, we found our Jeep now stuck like glue to corners we formerly enjoyed four-wheel-drifting through with our old tires. It wasn't as much fun, but it definitely was a whole lot safer. So add lateral traction on hard-pack into these tires' bag of tricks.

It's always hard to evaluate tire tread noise when your test vehicle is an open-top 4x4 that's 26 years old, but with some diligent attention (and killing the engine and coasting at opportune moments), we're fully prepared to officially

label these tires "quiet." And as well as they grip off-road, they grip even better on-road. They'd be perfect for the multipurpose rig in your life, and given Mickey Thompson's new PowerPly sidewall design that adds load carrying capability and stability, they'd be equally at home on a tow rig that needs to venture down the occasional dirt road or sandy wash. Honestly, about the only negative we can toss their way is that the ATZP3s are about 10 pounds heavier apiece than the old tires they replaced, so we do feel a drop in acceleration with our weak little four-cylinder. However, apples-to-oranges, those tires were two-ply sidewalls that we always worried about off-road. The Mickey Thompson ATZP3s give us a feeling of invincibility when we're out in the bad stuff, and that's security that's worth the weight.



1. We really put Mickey Thompson's claim that the new T4 rubber compound is more chip and cut resistant to the test. Despite thousands of street miles and many hard, rocky trail trips, the tires still look fresh and new.

2. In addition to a fun trail machine, our Wrangler test vehicle is a workhorse that's often put to use helping a buddy brush-bust trails on his property. The strong three-ply sidewalls have shrugged off tree limb and root jabs that would have killed lesser tires.

3. Our poser shot notwithstanding, hardpack dirt and rock is really where the Mickey Thompson ATZP3s shine. The carcass has great flexibility and strength, and the lugs grip like little fingers on every crevice. **FW**

SPECIFICATIONS

Tire: Mickey Thompson Baja ATZP3
Size: 31x10.50R15LT
Type: Radial
Load range: C
Max load (lbs): 2,270
Sidewall construction: Three-ply polyester
Tread construction: Three-ply polyester, two-ply steel, one-ply nylon
Approved rim width (in): 7-9
Tread depth (in): 18.5/32
Tread width (in): 8.4
Section width (in): 11.3
Overall diameter (in): 30.8
Maximum psi: 50
Weight (lbs): 45

SOURCES

Discount Tire
 866/895-8031, discounttire.com

Mickey Thompson
 330/928-9092, mickeythompson tires.com



Falken throws its hat in the mud-wrestling ring with a brand-new mud-terrain

By **Ben Battles** editor@fourwheeler.com Photography: Ben Battles

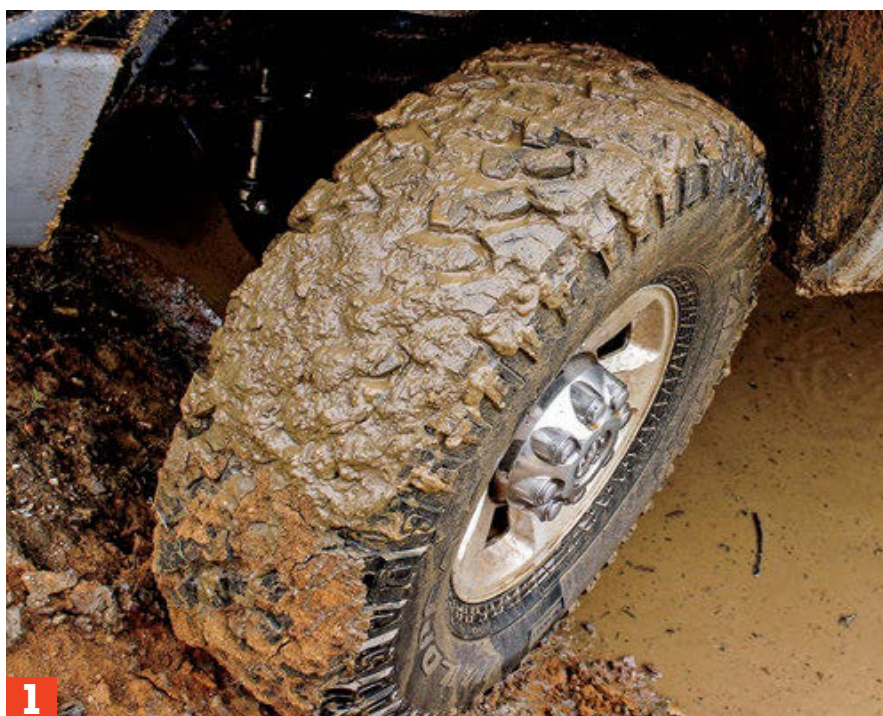
FALKEN WILDPEAK M/T

YOU KNOW THAT FEELING YOU get when something really outstanding happens in your life? You know what we're talking about: things like a past-due promotion, inheriting your grandfather's cool old truck, or being witness to your newborn child coming into the world? OK, well, we might be overstating this a tad, but that's

kind of the same type of "happy" we get when a manufacturer gives birth to a new mud-terrain tire. Maybe it's the possibility that these new sneakers will be the end-all, no-compromise answer to our off-road-rubber needs, or maybe it's that we just don't care. It's another mud-terrain option to choose from, and that's never a bad thing.

As a direct result of our magnetized draw to the backcountry, we just happen to be addicted to mud tires, and soon after writing this, we'll all have a brand-new and highly legitimate option to feed the addiction with: the WildPeak M/T from Falken. A few years back, Falken garnered some serious street-cred among off-road enthusiasts with its popu-

lar off-highway-performance-oriented WildPeak A/T tire. This tire touted better-than-average offroad traction among its all-terrain peers and matched it with an equal amount of positive on-road attributes. Where the rubber met the road (and trail), this tire lived up to its claims, and Falken hit the all-terrain scene rolling strong. With a win under its belt,



1

Falken set course to create a more-serious offroad tire—one that's not afraid to mix it up in the slop, instead of just dip its toes in and then skirt around it. Mud has always been an all-terrain's kryptonite, and in an effort to effectively address the glaring omission in their lineup, Falken gave birth to the prototype mud-terrain tire seen here. Falken is currently in the process of final refinements for the production versions, which should be available soon.

As soon as we got word of the new Falken M/Ts, we were chomping at the bit to get our hands on a set of the available 37x12.50R17 competition prototypes floating around. Being short a full-on race rig, we mounted them up on our buddy's second-generation Ram for testing, figuring that if they'd survive a thrashing on this heavy truck powered by a warmed-over Cummins 6BT diesel, they'd stand a pretty good chance of living a healthy life on anything less substantial. With a D-load rating of 3,525 pounds and a stout three-ply sidewall, as far as specifications were concerned, they were a good all-around match for our ¾-ton truck. Falken employs what looks like a fairly basic tread-block design on this new M/T, with stepped, L-shaped lugs running down the center and angled and staggered blocks on the edges, all siped for better ice and rock/hard-packed traction. No gimmicky-looking, superfluous tread patterns here. Atop and in-between the outer tread you find grooves and raised-



2

1. When testing off-road tires, sometimes it can be tough to get a handle on a particular tire's capabilities compared to others, but with time logged on other brands of mud-terrains mounted on this same truck, we had a couple of good baseline comparisons to work with. When mud was on the menu, the tires depended heavily on velocity to clean out the voids, but once spinning, they always seemed to get the job done.

2. Bite in loose stuff was excellent. The WildPeak M/Ts had a knack for harnessing the torque of the Cummins diesel and turning it into traction on loose soil and sand. Hard-packed dirt also served up good results, with predictable slide and braking characteristics.

3. Given the truck's weight and insane torque levels, we aired down

on the side of caution and didn't dip below 25 psi off-road. We would've liked to see how the tread would conform with 10 to 15 psi less when mounted on a lighter-weight rig, but even at this relatively high pressure, the Falkens performed well on this super-loose and rocky hillclimb, propelling us as far up the trail as we could physically stuff the big Ram.

4. It's tough for us not to get excited when a new mud-terrain tire hits the market, especially when it's on the heels of a successful all-terrain tread from the same company. While the WildPeak M/T's tread layout looks fairly basic by today's standards, sometimes simplicity can be the best approach. In this case, logical tread shapes and substantial sidewall tread proved a recipe for success. Although these are prototypes, standard-production versions are reported to look extremely similar.



3



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ribs, respectively, that both work toward the goal of releasing suction when mud tries to occupy the voids. These tread blocks extend down approximately a third of the sidewall and turn into some of the more useful looking sidewall tread we've seen in a while. The tread blocks on the production version are reported to look virtually the same, with very slight design changes.

Our initial impressions of the WildPeaks came while rolling down the road after being mounted. Qualities that brought themselves to light immediately were no "lug slap," no vibration, no squirmy sensation when sawing the steering wheel back and forth, and no real tire-noise to speak of (regardless of speed). For a high-void tread layout, these things are quiet—really quiet. With what have proven outstanding road manners, we wouldn't hesitate to recommend these for the daily commute. In lieu of standard, rim-mounted balancing weights, we used 10-ounces of "previously-tumbled" balancing beads in each tire to help them roll smooth and vibe free. They did the trick, but we can't help but think this had more to do with the mold-quality of the Falken's carcass than the balancing beads bouncing around inside them.

So if they're good on-road, they must be fairly unimpressive off-road, right? No! Honestly, there are few tires that can combine high levels of on-road

civility with aggressive off-road performance, but the WildPeak M/T's can be counted among them. Off-road testing was carried out over a three-month stretch, over multiple outings and on top of about every ground condition you could hope to encounter in the Northeast. True to their classification, these tires didn't disappoint in the slop. We ran the Falkens through sticky, clay-filled mud and soft-bottomed water holes, and so long as you kept the throttle set on "kill," the tread voids cleaned themselves out well. While not in the same goo-slinging class as a Super Swamper Bogger, we'd rank the Falken's mud-performance right up there with other top, "road-friendly" radial mud tires.

On hard-packed surfaces, the WildPeak M/T's were planted and predictable, and the tread compound gripped pretty well to rocks, roots, downed trees, and the like. Due to the weight of the truck and the non-beadlock wheels, we stayed pretty conservative with air pressure off-road. Aired down further, we can see the Falkens flexing and conforming quite well to whatever they rolled over. So far, we haven't noticed any substantial chunking of the tread.

Our last outing with the Falkens before writing this involved 10-12 inches of fresh heavy and wet snow sitting on a frozen base—a prime scenario for copious amounts of wheelspin and painfully slow

forward progress. Against odds, the Falken M/Ts really shined in these conditions and seemed to find traction where we didn't think they stood a chance. While we're on the topic of white stuff—If there was ever a good test for a tire's lateral traction, its sidehilling in the snow. With a big truck running on tightly wooded and snow-covered Northeast trails, you have yourself a surefire recipe for sheetmetal damage in off-camber situations. But, so long as we applied smooth and steady throttle to avoid tire spin, the hook-shaped tread blocks did their job and kept the truck tracking straight and outside of the tree line. Where ground conditions were more ice than snow, the Falkens had a difficult time grabbing traction, but this is typical with any mud-terrain tire, especially with a high-torque diesel spinning them.

To sum it up, the new Falken M/T definitely passes muster on both street and trail and gives its established mud-terrain competitors a new reason to worry. Using similar tires with a similar mission as a comparison, we found that they rolled down the road better than most and paralleled the offroad-traction levels of some of the best tires out there. Long-term durability and tread wear have yet to be determined, but if the production versions measure up to the prototypes everywhere else, we see good things in Falken's future. **FW**

5. If every now and then you don't get out and enjoy what winter forces upon you, you might find yourself with a touch of cabin fever. To avoid staring at the dog like he's food, we took a day to get out and romp around in the snow with our buddy's Ram. What we found is that the Falken M/Ts are excellent performers in the snow, with great traction-finding and side-hilling capabilities in wet and heavy snow. On glare-ice they're probably not the best option, but then again, no mud tire is.

6. Pavement performance—whether dry or wet—was as good as we've seen in a mud terrain. With a little over 5,000 miles on them to-date, we've worn about an 1/8 inch of tread from the rears and maybe half that up front. Not outstanding, but not terrible either, especially considering that this is a competition-spec prototype. Additionally, the contact patch is as even as the day we slapped 'em on. With a revised rubber-compound slated for the production version, we're holding high hopes that the Falken's wear characteristics will match the rest of its attributes.

SPECIFICATIONS

Tire: Falken WildPeak M/T
Size: 37x12.50R17
Type: Radial
Load range: D
Max load (lbs): 3,525
Sidewall construction: Three-ply polyester
Tread construction: Three-ply polyester, two-ply steel
Approved rim width (in): 8-10
Tread depth (in): 0.475
Tread width (in): 10
Section width (in): 12
Overall diameter (in): 36
Maximum psi: N/A
Weight (lbs): N/A

SOURCE

Falken Tire
 800/723-2553, falkentire.com

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SCREWDRIVER
SET**

ITEM 47770
61313/62570

Item 47770 shown

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TEMPERATURE
HEAT GUN
(572°/1112°)**

drillmaster

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LOT NO. 96289/62340/62546

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SUPER COUPON!

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Item 95272 shown

**30", 5 DRAWER
TOOL CART**

**★ WINNER ★
Best Mechanic's
Tool Cart
Truckin' Magazine**

LOT NO. 95272/69397/61427

SAVE \$185

\$164.99 ~~\$189.99~~

REG. PRICE \$349.99

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SUPER COUPON!

**27 LED PORTABLE
WORKLIGHT/FLASHLIGHT**

LOT NO. 67227
69567/60566/62532

Item 67227 shown

SAVE 62%

\$2.99 REG. PRICE \$7.99

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SUPER COUPON!

**2.5 HP, 21 GALLON
125 PSI VERTICAL
AIR COMPRESSOR**

CENTRALPNEUMATIC

Item 67847 shown

LOT NO. 67847/61454/61693

SAVE \$70

\$149.99 REG. PRICE \$219.99

61240702

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**4 PIECE 1" x 15 FT.
RATCHETING TIE DOWNS**

HaulMaster

LOT NO. 90984/60405/61524/62322

Item 90984 shown

SAVE 60%

\$7.99 REG. PRICE \$19.99

61278397

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SUPER COUPON!

**RAPID PUMP®
3 TON LOW PROFILE
HEAVY DUTY STEEL
FLOOR JACK**

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

Item 61253 shown

LOT NO. 68049/62326/60688/61253/61282

SAVE \$90

\$79.99 REG. PRICE \$169.99

61234276

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SUPER COUPON!

**3/8" x 14 FT. GRADE 43
TOWING CHAIN**

HaulMaster

LOT NO. 97711/60658

Item 97711 shown

SAVE 55%

\$19.99 REG. PRICE \$44.99

61234546

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SUPER COUPON!

**"Great Press for an Incredible Price!"
— American Iron Magazine**

20 TON SHOP PRESS

• Pair of Arbor Plates included

Item 60603 shown

LOT NO. 32879/60603

SAVE \$145

\$154.99 REG. PRICE \$299.99

61218407

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SUPER COUPON!

**"Impressive Accuracy,
Amazing Value"
— Car Craft Magazine**

**TORQUE
WRENCHES**

PITTSBURGH PRO

Item 239 shown

LOT NO. 2696/61277/807/61276/239/62431

YOUR CHOICE!

\$9.99 ~~\$21.99~~

REG. PRICE \$29.99

SAVE 66%

• Accuracy within ±4%

61228576

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SUPER COUPON!

2 PIECE VEHICLE WHEEL DOLLIES

HaulMaster

• 1500 Lb. Capacity

LOT NO. 67338/60343

Item 67338 shown

SAVE 37%

\$49.99 ~~\$50.99~~

REG. PRICE \$79.99

61247023

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SUPER COUPON!

**ADJUSTABLE SHADE
AUTO-DARKENING
WELDING HELMET**

CHICAGO ELECTRIC WELDING

LOT NO. 46092/61611

Item 46092 shown

SAVE 55%

\$35.99 REG. PRICE \$79.99

61252869

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PREDATOR GENERATORS

**4000 PEAK/
3200 RUNNING WATTS
6.5 HP (212 CC)
GAS GENERATORS**

• 70 dB Noise Level

LOT NO. 69676/69729/69675/69728

Item 69676 shown

SAVE \$200

\$299.99 REG. PRICE \$499.99

61257158

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SUPER COUPON!

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE
6 TON HEAVY DUTY STEEL JACK STANDS

Item 38847 shown
 LOT NO. 61197
 38847
 62393
 69596

\$3999
~~\$4999~~
 REG. PRICE \$79.99

SAVE 50%

61312823

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SUPER COUPON!

CENTECH
AUTOMATIC BATTERY FLOAT CHARGER

Item 42292 shown
 LOT NO. 42292
 69594/69955

\$599
~~\$19.99~~
 REG. PRICE \$19.99

SAVE 70%

61316523

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SUPER COUPON!

170 AMP MIG/FLUX WIRE WELDER

WE CARRY A FULL LINE OF WELDING WIRE AND ELECTRODES

SAVE \$135

\$16499
 REG. PRICE \$299.99
 LOT NO. 68885
 61888
 Item 68885 shown

CHICAGO ELECTRIC WELDING

61334231

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SUPER COUPON!

HFT
7 FT. 4" x 9 FT. 6" ALL PURPOSE WEATHER RESISTANT TARP

LOT NO. 877/69137
 69249/69129/69121/69115

Item 877 shown
\$299
~~\$8.99~~
 REG. PRICE \$8.99

SAVE 66%

61322345

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SUPER COUPON!

BADLAND
9000 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH REMOTE CONTROL AND AUTOMATIC BRAKE

LOT NO. 68143/61346
 61325/62278

Item 68143 shown
\$25999
~~\$499.99~~
 REG. PRICE \$499.99

SAVE \$240

61293953

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SUPER COUPON!

CENTRALPNEUMATIC
20 OZ. GRAVITY FEED SPRAY GUN

LOT NO. 47016
 67181/62300

Item 47016 shown
\$999
~~\$29.99~~
 REG. PRICE \$29.99

SAVE 66%

61304801

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SUPER COUPON!

NEW
12" SLIDING COMPOUND DOUBLE-BEVEL MITER SAW WITH LASER GUIDE

CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS

LOT NO. 69684/61776/61969/61970

Item 69684 shown
\$13499
~~\$19799~~
 REG. PRICE \$299.99

SAVE \$165

61309378

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SUPER COUPON!

2" x 20 FT. TOW STRAP

HaulMaster

• 2800 lb. Working Load

LOT NO. 36612
 60675/61943

Item 36612 shown
\$999
~~\$19.99~~
 REG. PRICE \$19.99

SAVE 50%

61323417

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SUPER COUPON!

8 CHANNEL SURVEILLANCE DVR WITH 4 INFRARED CAMERAS

Bunker Hill Security

Item 61229 shown
\$25999
~~\$28999~~
 REG. PRICE \$399.99

SAVE \$140

LOT NO. 68332
 61229/61624/62463

61308230

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SUPER COUPON!

CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS
4" HEAVY DUTY ANGLE GRINDER

LOT NO. 91222
 60373

Item 91222 shown
\$1499
~~\$29.99~~
 REG. PRICE \$29.99

SAVE 50%

61326426

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SUPER COUPON!

1 TON CAPACITY FOLDABLE SHOP CRANE

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

• Includes Ram, Hook and Chain

LOT NO. 69445
 69512/61858/93840

Item 69512 shown
\$9999
~~\$249.99~~
 REG. PRICE \$249.99

SAVE \$150

61336215

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SUPER COUPON!

18" VOLT 1/2" CORDLESS IMPACT WRENCH

CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS

LOT NO. 60380

• 330 ft. lbs. max. torque
 Battery and charger included.

\$9999
~~\$139.99~~
 REG. PRICE \$139.99

SAVE \$40

61290570

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SUPER COUPON!

CENTRALPNEUMATIC
40 LB. CAPACITY FLOOR BLAST CABINET

LOT NO. 68893
 62144/93608

Item 68893 shown
\$17999
~~\$299.99~~
 REG. PRICE \$299.99

SAVE \$120

61312576

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SUPER COUPON!

3 PIECE TITANIUM NITRIDE COATED HIGH SPEED STEEL STEP DRILLS

WARRIOR

• Drill 28 Hole Sizes

Item 91616 shown
 LOT NO. 91616
 69087/60379

\$799
~~\$19.99~~
 REG. PRICE \$19.99

SAVE 60%

61317181

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SUPER COUPON!

US GENERAL PRO
26", 16 DRAWER ROLLER CABINET

LOT NO. 67831/61609

• 1060 lb. Capacity
 • 14,600 cu. in. of storage

Item 67831 shown
\$31999
~~\$649.99~~
 REG. PRICE \$649.99

SAVE \$330

61329518

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SUPER COUPON!

45 WATT SOLAR PANEL KIT

LOT NO. 68751
 62443

Item 68751 shown
\$13999
~~\$299.99~~
 REG. PRICE \$299.99

SAVE \$160

61300815

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SUPER COUPON!

RETRACTABLE AIR HOSE REEL WITH 3/8" x 50 FT. HOSE

Item 93897 shown
 LOT NO. 93897
 69265/62344

\$5999
~~\$8999~~
 REG. PRICE \$149.99

SAVE \$90

61288948

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SUPER COUPON!

12 VOLT, 250 PSI AIR COMPRESSOR

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

LOT NO. 4077/61740

Item 4077 shown
\$599
~~\$14.99~~
 REG. PRICE \$14.99

SAVE 60%

61290886

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BEADLOCK

INPUT

What to look for
when buying beadlocks

By John Cappa editor@fourwheeler.com Photography: John Cappa

INSTALLING YOUR FIRST SET OF BEADLOCKS CAN BE A TOTAL GAME CHANGER off-road if you have figured out how to properly manipulate your tire pressure. If you are a careful driver, you can get down to about 12-15 psi in your tires without running a beadlock wheel. Heavier $\frac{3}{4}$ and 1-ton-rated vehicles might need a bit more air pressure to support the increased weight. However, to truly get the full traction and performance potential from your 4x4, most tires can be aired down

to between 1 and 10 psi, depending on vehicle weight, tire size and design, terrain, wheel width, and so on. The only way to be able to successfully utilize these single digit pressures off-road without unseating tire beads regularly is with a set of beadlock wheels. There are several different beadlock designs available, and each design has its pros and cons. What works for you will depend on your budget, your vehicle, your intended use, and personal preference.



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Outer Clamp-On

Currently, this is the most common type of beadlock wheel available in the aftermarket. Companies such as ATX, Champion, Eaton, OMF, and TrailReady offer clamp-on style beadlocks. The clamp-on style beadlock wheel is made up of two main components: the wheel structure, including a welded-on or cast-in surface with threaded holes, and the beadlock clamping ring itself. The ring is typically held on with $\frac{5}{16}$ or $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch Grade-8 hardware. We've seen beadlock wheels with as many as 40 clamping bolts to as few as 18 bolts. Some beadlock companies such as Champion and OMF can install beadlocks on your existing aluminum wheels. This offers a potential cost savings over buying entirely new wheels with beadlocks. Other companies such as Ballistic Fabrication offer kits that allow you to weld the beadlock mounting rings to your steel wheels.

Look for clamp-on beadlocks with at least 24 clamping bolts. Beadlock wheels with fewer bolts are generally light-duty and reserved for the roundy-round dirt track crowd. More bolts are, of course, better, but tightening 40 bolts per wheel can be quite a laborious task. Wheels with at least 24 bolts hold up well to regular off-road abuse. Also, more bolts may not really be necessary, especially if the bolt heads are submerged and protected from impact with trail hazards.

Other features we look for in a clamp-on-style beadlock include a stepped tire mounting surface on the wheel. This design centers the tire better than other designs that depend on the bolts or a stepped clamping ring alone to center the tire. A stepped wheel also allows the tire to place the weight of the vehicle on the main structure of the wheel instead of side loading the bolts.

The tire-mounting surfaces of clamp-on beadlocks are often knurled or have a grooved machined surface. This is done to keep the tire from spinning on the wheel and to keep the tire bead from pulling out of the clamped beadlock. We've seen an 18-bolt beadlock with a thin steel clamping ring let the tire pop out before. It was slick from powdercoating and didn't have enough bolts or material to keep the tire in check. Thicker clamping rings are generally better for off-road



⚙️ We prefer clamp-on beadlock wheels that have a step built into the wheel. This centers and supports the tire and vehicle weight better than a flat mounting surface that relies on the bolts for centering.

⚙️ Other good features to look for on clamp-on beadlocks are flush mounted bolts and knurled or machined bead clamping surfaces. A machined bead surface like this helps ensure that the tire won't slip out of place.



⚙️ These weld-on steel rings from Ballistic Fabrication help any competent welder easily and inexpensively convert steel wheels to beadlocks. The weld-on rings are not stepped so the tires center on the bolts.

use because they make contact with rocks and other trail obstacles. If you frequent the rocks, you can consider the bolts and rings a wearable item. When they start looking really banged up, they should be replaced.

In extreme cases, some users will install a clamp-on beadlock to both the inner and outer wheel beads. It can cause clearance issues around brakes, and in most cases, it's just not needed on a recreational 4x4.



Pros:

- ⚙️ Relatively easy to mount and dismount tires in your own garage
- ⚙️ Some can be added to your current wheels

Cons:

- ⚙️ Generally are not DOT compliant (i.e. not street legal)
- ⚙️ Hardware can loosen if wheels are banged around in the rocks regularly



Double Inner Beadlock

Double inner beadlocks, such as those from Hutchinson and Rock Monster, are designed to hold both the inner and outer bead in place, no matter what happens to the tire, even if it gets shredded. Double beadlocks are commonly found in on- and off-road race, industrial, and military applications where the driver doesn't have the luxury of being able to get out and install the spare tire. They are often combined with a runflat system, although most recreational double beadlocks don't have this feature. The double beadlock usually consists of a plastic, rubber, or aluminum donut that sits inside of a multi-piece wheel. When the wheel is bolted together, the internal donut supports the tire beads against the edges of the bead surface. Double beadlock wheels are often substantially heavier than conventional wheels because there are more pieces. While it is pos-

⚙️ These Hutchinson 5-ton military internal double beadlocks are two-piece wheels that bolt together and sandwich a rubber donut between the tire beads. This design keeps the tire beads attached to the wheel regardless of the tire's air pressure. Recreational internal double beadlocks are very similar.

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Geolandar A/T-S
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sible to dismount and mount tires on a double beadlock in your own garage, many require sealant or large O-rings that can become damaged during assembly or disassembly.

Another type of double beadlock is the Staun II Pneumatic Dual Beadlock from Coyote Enterprises. It's an internal double beadlock available for most 15, 16, and 17-inch conventional wheels. It's basically a tire within the tire. The Staun II system is made up of an air bladder (inner tube) and fabric case (inner tire). The assembly acts as a second air chamber. The Staun II beadlocks have many advantages over other beadlocks including light weight, improved tire strength at the tread and sidewall, and the ability to use them as a runflat, among other things. However, the Staun II internal beadlocks can make it more difficult to mount and dismount tires. They also require that you drill a second valve stem hole in your wheels.

Pros:

- Keeps inner and outer bead seated no matter what
- Most are DOT compliant (i.e. street legal)

Cons:

- Can be difficult to assemble and disassemble
- Some are substantially heavier than conventional wheels



➤ The civilian Rock Monster aluminum internal double beadlocks are quite a bit lighter than their steel military counterparts. However, because of the multi-piece design, they are generally quite a bit heavier than a traditional wheel. The protruding hardware holding the wheel together is extremely tough, but it can be damaged in abusive conditions.

➤ This Staun air bladder and fabric case act as a double beadlock inside the wheel. They are lighter than any other beadlock design, can be added to your wheels, and are completely street legal. They have many advantages but can be more difficult to install and uninstall than other beadlock designs.



Single Inner Clamp

The B.A.D. Wheels Eklipse 17 doesn't really fit into the other beadlock categories. It's essentially a single inner beadlock. The design makes it DOT compliant so the wheels are street legal. Three cast aluminum elements are bolted inside the wheel and clamp the outer tire bead to the bead surface, keeping it from popping off of its seat. The B.A.D. wheels weigh more than a conventional wheel, but they also have a very high weight rating, making them a good choice for heavier fullsize 4x4s. The design can make it difficult to mount and dismount tires, but much of the hard-

ware is hidden and well protected from trail debris inside the wheel. There are a few optional bolt-on outer rings that make the wheels more versatile, depending on your application.

Pros:

- DOT compliant (i.e. street legal)
- Mostly hidden hardware

Cons:

- Can be difficult to mount and dismount tires
- Heavy

SOURCES

ATX Wheels
atxwheels.com

B.A.D. Wheels
864/491-0438, badwheelsinc.com

Ballistic Fabrication
520/888-4441, ballisticfabrication.com

Champion Beadlock
951/471-2183, cwibeadlock.com

Coyote Enterprises
949/645-7733, coyoteents.com

Eaton Wheel
800/847-3287, ntwnline.com

Hutchinson Wheels
609/394-1010, hutchinsoninc.com

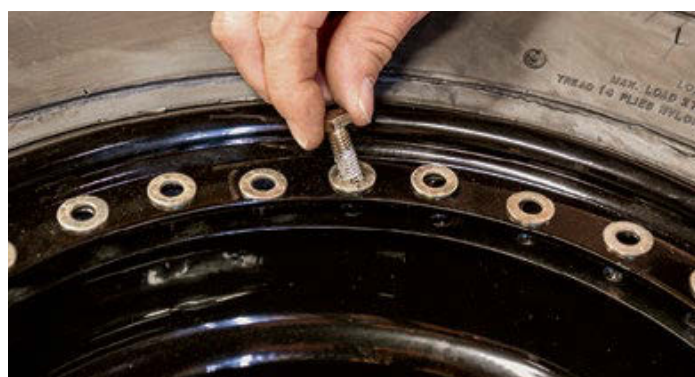
OMF Performance Products
951/354-8272, omfperformance.com

Rock Monster Wheels
609/394-1010, rockmonsterwheels.com

TrailReady Products
425/353-6776, trbeadlocks.com



➤ The B.A.D. Wheels Eklipse 17 works just like an ordinary wheel. The exception is the three cast-aluminum elements that are bolted to the inside of the wheel, which clamp the tire in place. All of the beadlock hardware is protected within the wheel and tire.



➤ No matter which clamp-on beadlock you choose, always use plenty of anti-seize on the beadlock bolt threads. This will make taking the wheels apart later a lot easier. **FW**



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- *Jason Carner*, Owner, Blue Torch Fabworks

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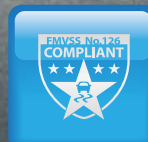
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F250/F350	08-10	4WD	6"	Stage I Kit w/ ES Shocks	EXP4150B	\$1124.99
F250/F350	08-10	4WD	6"	Stage II Kit w/ ES Shocks	EXP4152B	\$1686.99
F250/F350	05-07	4WD	8"	Stage I Kit w/ ES Shocks	EXP4043B	\$1208.99
F250/F350	05-07	4WD	6"	Stage I Kit w/ ES Shocks	EXP4037B	\$1057.99
F250/F350	05-07	4WD	2"	Spacer Kit w/ ES Shocks	EXP4030B	\$544.99
F250/F350	99-04	4WD	6.5"	Kit w/ ES Shocks	EXP4016B	\$1237.99
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Long Arm Kits	07-15* JK 6" w/shocks	EXP3098B	From \$3558.99
	97-06 TJ 4" w/shocks	EXP3088B	From \$2991.99

*2009-2010 Call for availability

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1500 Pickup		99-07	4WD	6"	Kit w/ ES Shocks	EXP1057B	\$1662.99
2500 Pickup		11-15	2/4WD	6"	Knuckle Kit w/ ES Shocks	EXP1085B	\$1807.99
3500 Pickup		11-15	2/4WD	6"	Knuckle Kit w/ ES Shocks	EXP1087B	\$1954.99
Tahoe/Yukon		2015	2/4WD	6"	Stage I Kit w/ ES Shocks	EXP1160B	\$1904.99

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1500		2015	4WD	6"	Stage I Kit w/ ES	EXP2101B	\$1868.99
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Tundra		07-14	2/4WD	6"	Stage I Kit w/ ES	EXP5069B	\$1874.99
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F-250/350 SD	08-09	4"	RANRS6514B	\$1151.97		
F-250/350 SD	05-07	2.5"	RANRS6510B	\$550.99		
F-350 SD 4WD	11-12	4"	RANRS6524B	\$900.98		
F-350 SD 4WD	11-12	2.5"	RANRS6525B	\$599.99		
Chevy/GM						
Tah/Yuk/Yuk XL	07-12	4"	RANRS6582B	\$2101.96		
Silv. 1500	2014	6"	RANRS66301B	\$1752.95		
Silv. 1500	07-13	4"	RANRS6583B	\$1701.96		
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Wrangler TJ	97-06	6" L. Arm	SKYTJ60RR1K	\$1901.96	
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F150	11-14	3.5L	2	+ 11 hp	K/N63-2583	\$278.99
SVT Raptor	10-14	6.2L	2	+ 20 hp	K/N77-2579KTK	\$343.99
F250/F350 SD	11-15	6.7L DSL	2	+ 12 hp	K/N63-2582	\$365.99
F250/F350 SD	11-15	6.2L	2	+ 14 hp	K/N77-2582KTK	\$266.99
JEEP						
Wrangler	12-15	3.6L	2	+ 12 hp	K/N63-1566	\$296.99
Wrangler	12-15	3.6L	2	+ 12 hp	K/N63-1566	\$296.99
Wrangler	07-10	3.8L	1	+ 8 hp	K/N57-1553	\$262.99
Wrangler	97-06	4.0L	1	+ 12 hp	K/N57-1514-1	\$243.99
RAM						
1500	11-14	5.7L	2	+ 16 hp	K/N63-1561	\$280.99
1500	11-12	4.7L	2	+ 9 hp	K/N63-1529	\$316.99
2500/3500	13-15	6.7L DSL	2	+ 15 hp	K/N63-1568	\$219.99
2500/3500	13-14	5.7L	2	+ 16 hp	K/N63-1561	\$280.99
2500/3500	11-12	6.7L DSL	2	+ 8 hp	K/N63-1562	\$449.99
TOYOTA						
Tacoma	12-14	4.0L	2	+ 9 hp	K/N63-9037	\$282.99
Tacoma	05-13	2.7L	2	+ 7 hp	K/N63-9026	\$314.99
Tacoma	05-11	4.0L	2	+ 10 hp	K/N63-9025	\$266.99
Tundra	10-14	4.6L	2	+ 14 hp	K/N63-9035	\$296.99
Tundra	12-14	5.7L	2	+ 9 hp	K/N63-9036	\$296.99
Tundra	07-11	5.7L	2	+ 13 hp	K/N63-9031-1	\$274.99

NOTES:

1) Street Legal in 50 States.

2) Street Legal in most states, not legal for sale or use in California or other states with similar emission control regulations.

*Estimated horsepower and torque gains based on specific or similar vehicle dynamometer tests. Results will vary.

* Prices subject to change without notice. See website for current pricing and specials. *

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Tire Size	Part#	Price
245/75R16	BFG15477	\$165.99
265/75R16	BFG67179	\$176.99
275/65R18	BFG36457	\$222.99
275/70R17	BFG76597	\$188.99
285/65R18	BFG93857	\$247.99
285/75R16	BFG05855	\$197.99
35X12.50R18	BFG13389	\$296.99
265/70R18	BFG40855	\$247.99
275/55R20	BFG12579	\$211.99
275/55R20	BFG12579	\$211.99
275/60R20	BFG64811	\$236.99

All Terrain T/A K0

Tire Size	Part#	Price	Tire Size	Part#	Price
215/75R15	BFG02821	\$129.99	295/75R16	BFG92042	\$231.99
235/75R15	BFG29274	\$139.99	315/75R16	BFG03643	\$238.99
31/10.50R15	BFG03119	\$163.99	37/12.50R17	BFG12411	\$364.99
33/10.50R15	BFG63540	\$164.99	265/70R17	BFG12665	\$208.99
33/12.50R15	BFG09681	\$173.99	285/70R17	BFG37130	\$234.99
35/12.50R15	BFG49774	\$188.99	305/65R17	BFG00875	\$276.99
215/70R16	BFG42014	\$173.99	265/65R18	BFG02625	\$266.99
225/70R16	BFG02204	\$191.99	285/65R18	BFG93857	\$247.99
235/70R16	BFG72870	\$183.99	305/65R18	BFG35237	\$311.99
235/85R16	BFG10416	\$161.99	325/65R18	BFG05968	\$330.99
245/70R16	BFG03219	\$186.99	305/55R20	BFG30836	\$366.99
245/75R16	BFG11379	\$195.99	285/55R20	BFG30710	\$379.99
255/70R16	BFG78762	\$202.99	325/60R20	BFG38941	\$468.99
275/70R16	BFG94223	\$221.99	325/50R22	BFG35959	\$638.99
305/70R16	BFG33393	\$236.99			

Mud Terrain KM2

Tire Size	Part#	Price	Tire Size	Part#	Price
215/75R15	BFG21765	CALL	LTS245/70R17/E	BFG26841	CALL
235/75R15	BFG85672	\$183.99	LTS285/70R17/E	BFG37037	\$339.99
30/9.50R15	BFG15976	\$175.99	LT305/65R17/D	BFG34424	\$319.99
31/10.50R15	BFG24264	CALL	35/12.50R17/D	BFG38371	\$324.99
32/11.50R15	BFG11079	\$203.99	37/12.50R17/D	BFG99782	\$407.99
33/12.50R15	BFG45738	\$214.99	LT305/60R18/E	BFG31489	\$368.99
35/12.50R15	BFG07737	\$216.99	35/12.50R18/D	BFG28459	\$421.99
235/70R16	BFG72870	\$183.99	37/12.50R18/D	BFG97218	\$550.99
235/85R16	BFG40661	CALL	LT305/55R20/E	BFG20881	\$531.99
245/75R16	BFG13290	\$238.99	LT325/60R20/D	BFG34143	\$584.99
255/85R16	BFG04222	CALL	37/12.50R20/D	BFG39143	\$679.99
265/75R16	BFG19683	\$226.99	42/14.50R20/C	BFG96757	\$846.99
LT315/75R16/D	BFG24970	\$313.99	LT335/55R22/D	BFG10687	\$681.99

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20x9.5 \$253.99
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17x9 \$171.99

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6051 Chrome
20x9 \$341.99
8151 Machined
20x9 \$253.99

VAPOR
5183 Machined
5183
17x9 \$205.99
20x9.5 \$289.99

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31 Series Black

15x8	\$122.99
16x8	\$135.99
17x9	\$166.99
18x9	\$184.99
20x9	\$253.99

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5034
17x8.5 \$165.99
18x9 \$183.99

10 GAUGE
5050 10 Gauge
5050 Flat Black
17x8.5 \$253.99
18x9 \$341.99

7069 Flat Black
1069 7069
15x8 \$107.99 \$115.99
15x10 \$114.99 \$119.99
16x8 \$121.99 \$127.99
16x10 \$127.99 N/A
17x9 \$137.99 \$155.99
18x9 \$144.99 N/A

PREDATOR
5035 Black
5035 Predator
17x8.5 \$165.99
18x9 \$183.99

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7029 Satin Black
29 Series Black/Machined Satin Blk
16x8 \$159.99 \$159.99
17x8.5 \$179.99 \$179.99

7032 Flat Black
7032
16x8 \$135.99
17x9 \$166.99
18x9 \$184.99
20x9 \$253.99

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89 Series Flat Blk Polished Chrome
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18x9 \$184.99

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107
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LT305/65R17 LR E \$294.99 LT285/55R20 LR E \$339.99
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Size	Part#	Price	Size	Part#	Price
31x10.50R15	55031	\$167.99	LT305/65R17	517305	\$275.99
32x11.50R15	55032	\$179.99	LT285/70R17	57285	\$239.99
33x12.50R15	55033	\$199.99	LT315/70R17	57315	\$284.99
LT265/75R16	560265	\$179.99	37X12.50R17LT	5171237	\$354.99
LT305/70R16	56305	\$244.99	LT305/60R18	5865295	\$382.99
LT285/75R16	561285	\$219.99	37x12.50R18	5801237	\$439.99
LT315/75R16	516315	\$247.99	37x13.50R20	5201337	\$419.99
LT265/70R17	570265	\$222.99			

Xterra
35x12.50R18 \$404.99
305/65R17 \$309.99
285/75R16 \$266.99

Xtreme MT2
31X10.50R15 \$189.99
33X12.50R15 \$239.99
35X12.50R15 \$259.99
LT265/75R16 \$249.99
LT285/75R16 \$259.99
LT265/70R17 \$264.99
LT285/70R17 \$319.99
LT305/65R17 \$319.99
LT315/70R17 \$327.99
40X13.50R17 \$399.99
LT295/65R18 \$369.99
LT305/70R18 \$359.99
37X12.50R18 \$409.99
LT295/55R20 \$394.99
LT295/60R20 \$419.99
35X12.50R20 \$384.99
37X12.50R20 \$464.99

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Size	Price
36X13.50-15LT	\$311.99
37X14.00-15LT	\$326.99
39.5X13.50-15LT	\$408.99
14/42-15LT	\$557.99
36X13.50-16LT	\$331.99
37X14.00-16LT	\$340.99
39.5X13.50-16LT	\$421.99
14/42-16LT	\$559.99
36X13.50-16.5LT	\$338.99
37X14.00-16.5LT	\$348.99
39.5X13.50-16.5LT	\$425.99
14/42-16.5LT	\$554.99
21/49-16.5LT	\$850.99
36X13.50-17LT	\$330.99
37X14.00-17LT	\$343.99
39.5X13.50-17LT	\$420.99
14/42-17LT	\$573.99
21/49-17LT	\$877.99
36X13.50-20LT	\$350.99
39.5X13.50-20LT	\$431.99
21/49-20LT	\$948.99

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Size	Price	Size	Price
31X12.50-15LT	\$318.99	16/35-16LT	\$421.99
33X10.50-15LT	\$300.99	37X13.00-16LT	\$414.99
33X12.50-15LT	\$334.99	38.5X11.00-16LT	\$378.99
33X14.00-15LT	\$341.99	15/38.5-16LT	\$411.99
35X10.50-15LT	\$345.99	19.5/44-16LT	\$773.99
35X14.50-15LT	\$392.99	33X12.50-16.5LT	\$344.99
16/35-15LT	\$420.99	33X14.00-16.5LT	\$354.99
37X13.00-15LT	\$419.99	35X14.50-16.5LT	\$406.99
38.5/11.00-15LT	\$387.99	16/35-16.5LT	\$429.99
15/38.5-15LT	\$407.99	16/35-16.5LT	\$507.99
18/39.5-15LT	\$598.99	37X13.00-16.5LT	\$422.99
19.5/44-15LT	\$758.99	37X13.00-16.5LT	\$428.99
31X12.50-16LT	\$323.99	15/38.5-16.5LT	\$406.99
33X10.50-16LT	\$312.99	38.5X11.00-16.5LT	\$733.99
33X12.50-16LT	\$336.99	18/39.5-16.5LT	\$608.99
37X14.00-16LT	\$346.99	19.5/44-16.5LT	\$778.99
35X10.50-16LT	\$356.99	37X13.00-17LT	\$435.99
35X14.50-16LT	\$388.99	19.5/44-20	\$886.99

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Size	Price	Size	Price
31X10.50R15	\$167.99	LT305/65R17	\$275.99
32X11.50R15	\$179.99	LT285/70R17	\$239.99
33X12.50R15	\$199.99	LT315/70R17	\$284.99
LT265/75R16	\$179.99	37X12.50R17LT	\$354.99
LT305/70R16	\$244.99	LT305/60R18	\$382.99
LT285/75R16	\$219.99	37x12.50R18	\$439.99
LT315/75R16	\$247.99	37x13.50R20	\$419.99
LT265/70R17	\$222.99		

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Size	Price	Size	Price
27X850R14	\$145.99	LT245/70R17	\$243.99
LT235/75R15	\$162.99	LT265/70R17	\$237.99
30X950R15	\$170.99	LT265/70R17	\$259.99
31X1050R15	\$193.99	LT305/70R17	\$274.99
32X1150R15	\$210.99	LT255/65R17	\$196.99
33X1250R15	\$231.99	35X1250R17	\$283.99
35X1250R15	\$264.99	LT235/80R17	\$208.99
LT255/85R16	\$215.99	LT285/70R17	\$265.99
LT275/70R16	\$213.99	LT275/65R18	\$287.99
LT245/75R16	\$202.99	LT275/65R18	\$314.99
LT265/75R16	\$198.99	LT275/70R18	\$339.99
LT265/75R16	\$190.99	LT285/75R18	\$327.99
LT305/70R16	\$253.99	LT325/60R20	\$370.99
LT315/75R16	\$270.99	LT275/65R20	\$287.99
LT245/70R17	\$220.99	LT305/55R20	\$341.99

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Size	Price
32X11.50R15	\$195.99
33X12.50R15	\$207.99
35X12.50R15	\$202.99
LT235/85R16	\$186.99
LT265/75R16	\$222.99
LT265/70R16	\$274.99
LT315/75R16	\$275.99
LT255/75R17	\$212.99
LT285/70R17	\$266.99
35X12.50R17	\$298.99
37X12.50R17	\$345.99
38X14.50R17	\$440.99
40X13.50R17	\$512.99
LT275/65R18	\$309.99
LT275/65R20	\$374.99
LT285/65R20	\$395.99

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Digging in with trendy traction

By John Cappa editor@fourwheeler.com Photography John Cappa

MICKEY THOMPSON DEEGAN 38



IF YOU'VE SPENT ANY TIME AT all following the early days of the freestyle motocross (FMX) world, then the name Brian Deegan rings a bell. He was well known for his anti-establishment antics, following his own rules, and doing his own thing. Unfortunately, we all have to grow up, and being an outcast rebel doesn't pay the bills. As younger, faster, and more talented riders moved up the ranks, Brian Deegan reinvented himself and morphed into becoming a successful short-course off-road race driver. That eventually connected him with Mickey Thompson. The relationship eventually led to the development of the Deegan 38, an aggressive, made-in-the-USA, radial mud tire designed to work well both on- and off-road.

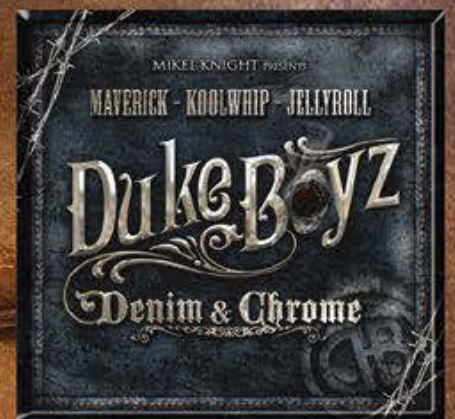
Don't be fooled by the Deegan 38 insignia. The 38 refers to Deegan's race number, not the tire's diameter. The Deegan 38 is currently available in 13 different sizes for 15, 16, 17, 18, and 20-inch wheels. The smallest tire available is a 31x10.50R15, with the largest being a 37x12.50R20. We settled into a quartet of 37x12.50R17 tires. The first thing we noticed about the Deegan 38 is its light weight, especially when you consider that our 37s have a D load range and are capable of supporting 3,525 pounds each at 50 psi. A lighter tire will outperform heavier tires in terms of braking and acceleration. That should always be a consideration when installing larger tires.

We mounted our Deegan 38s on 17x9 Mickey Thompson Classic Baja Lock aluminum wheels. The simulated beadlock wheels are sprayed with a matte-black protective finish. Each ring is machined into the wheel. Because it's not removable, it adds strength to the outer edge of the wheel to help avoid damage in the rocks. The Classic Baja Lock wheel is great for those that like the look of a real beadlock without the complexity, expense, or potential street-legality issues. They are

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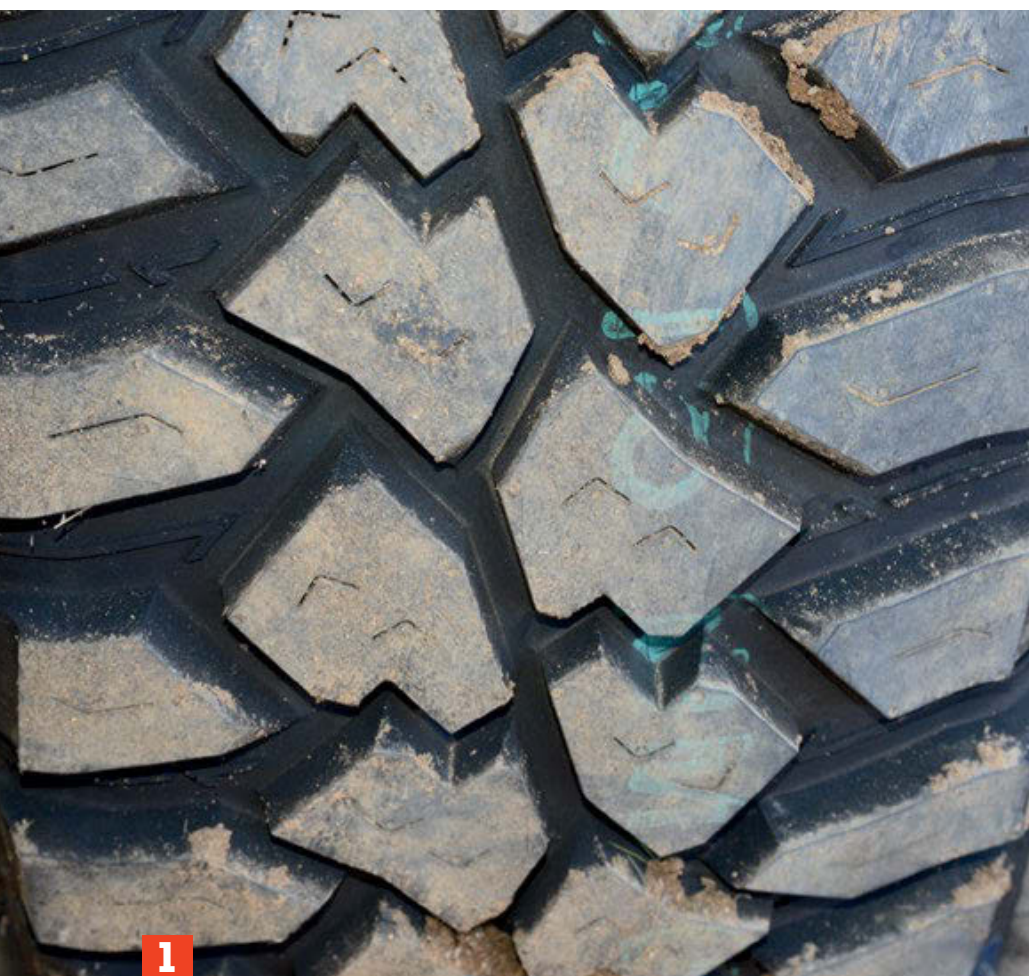


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1



2

available in 15, 16, and 17-inch diameters, in widths from 7 to 12 inches wide.

Our Deegan 38 tires required very little weight to balance out—Each of the four tires needed less than 2 ounces to spin true. On the street, you should expect some road noise, as they are not all-terrain tires. However, the tighter inner void sections of the tread help to reduce overall noise.

The large aggressive tread lugs make the Deegan 38 a good choice for mud and other loose and loamy terrain. The chunky lugs have sipes, which helps with wet and ice covered roads, but if ice sheets are a regular staple for your 4x4, you'll probably be better off with a less aggressive tire that has more siping, like the Mickey Thompson Baja STZ. Even at street pressures, the Deegan 38 tread and sidewalls flex and envelop rocks and other obstacles, thanks in part to the sipes in the lugs. Airing the tires down to the low teens is ideal for most trails without the use of true beadlock wheels. The large outer voids allow the Deegan 38 to self-clean in the sticky stuff.

The light overall weight, easy-to-balance characteristics, and load capacity make the Deegan 38 a good option for heavy-duty tow rigs, as well as smaller 4x4s.

The two-ply sidewall of the Deegan 38 is definitely sturdier than a run-of-the-mill radial tire. However, we would probably want a little more beef if we planned to frequent off-road areas with an excessive amount of sharp split granite. Brian Deegan supporters will appreciate the raised white Deegan 38 lettering available on all but the 20-inch sizes. We opted to put the white letters in. Regardless of if you like and follow Brian Deegan or if you've never heard of him, the Mickey Thompson Deegan 38 is a solid on- and off-road tire you can depend on.

1. The chunky tread lugs are best suited for mud and other loamy off-road terrain. The sipes in each lug will help in wet weather and winter conditions, although we would choose a less aggressive tire for regular ice runs.

2. The Mickey Thompson Classic Baja Lock aluminum wheels feature a built-in (not removable) simulated beadlock ring that makes the wheel stronger and less susceptible to damage from hard hits off-road. The matte-black finish and smooth wheel design make it easy to clean.

3. Even at street pressure, the tread and sidewall of the Deegan 38 envelops obstacles. Most off-road conditions can be handled with air pressures set in the low teens. **FW**

SPECIFICATIONS

Tire: Mickey Thompson Deegan 38
Size: 37x12.50R17
Type: Radial
Load range: D
Max load (lbs): 3,525
Sidewall construction: Two-ply polyester
Tread construction: One-ply nylon, two-ply steel, two-ply polyester
Approved rim width (in): 8.5-11
Tread depth (in): 2 1/32
Tread width (in): 9.88
Section width (in): 13.1
Overall diameter (in): 36.7
Maximum psi: 50
Weight (lbs): 73

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Bargain tread test

By **Henry Mueller** editor@fourwheeler.com Photography: Dave Wagner

ATTURO TRAIL BLADE A/T

IT'S NOT A TIRE BRAND THAT immediately comes to mind, but chances are Atturo will be coming on your radar if you're looking for

good tires at a great price. Lots of people shop for tires by price alone—That's setting up yourself for failure. You've always got to give more weight to your

end goal than price because you'll be living with your choice for at least a couple years, and in most cases, 30,000-60,000 miles, depending on how much

tread life you can squeeze out of your tires. When you factor in a \$20 or \$30 difference in price per tire, it makes more sense to spend a little extra to make sure



When you're buying six tires instead of only four, price matters. We found online pricing for our LT265/70R17 test size as low as \$122 per tire, which is less than half the price of some competing manufacturer offerings.



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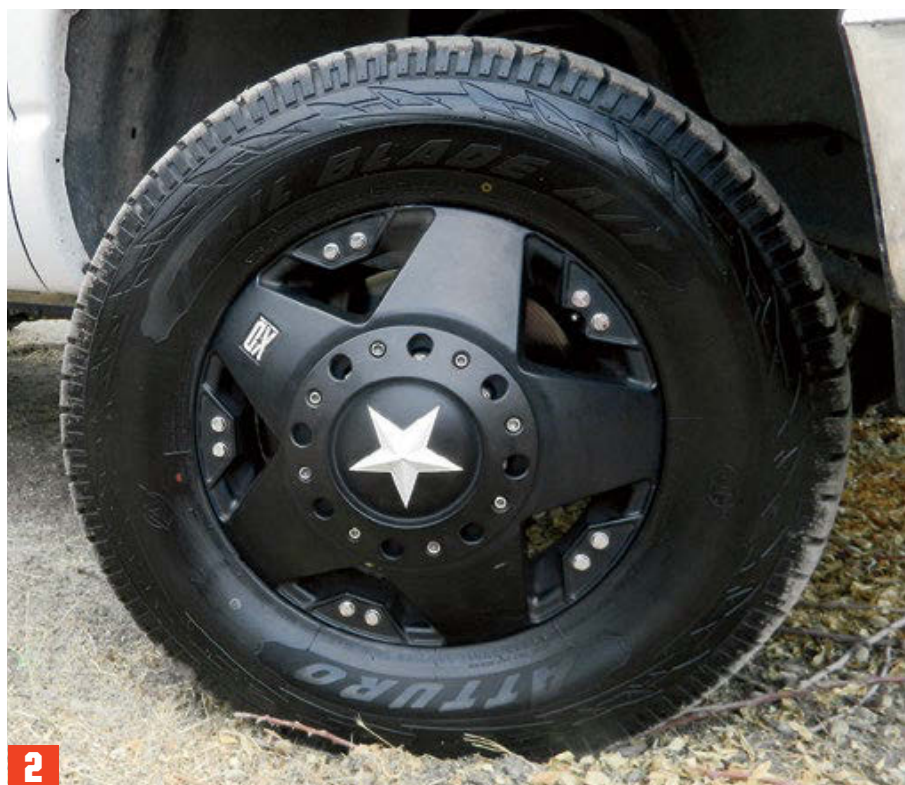
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you're living with something you can, well, live with.

In this case, we had a newer Ram 3500 dualie tow rig with a Cummins engine that was used for everything from daily commuting to hauling motorcycles out to the desert on the weekends to hauling a huge fifth-wheel toy hauler. Aside from a blingy set of wheels, the 4x4 was completely stock, so we needed a tread that would bite hard in mountain snow of the Sierras, wouldn't dig and chew in the sand washes of Glamis, and could shrug off the occasional hard rock-hit or cactus

encounter on the way to motorcycle man camp.

We selected a set of six Atturo Trail Blade A/T tires. The Trail Blade A/Ts feature lots of highly siped tread blocks with many biting angles to pull the stiffly sprung Ram through the worst hard-pack terrain. The treads are arranged essentially in five circumferential bands, with the center band helping in carcass stability, and the four circumferential grooves helping evacuate water. The large outer tread shoulder blocks help on-road stability and steering response and the arched

SPECIFICATIONS

Tire: Atturo Trail Blade A/T
Size: LT265/70R17
Type: Radial
Load range: E
Max load (lbs): 3,195 (single) or 2,910 (dual)
Sidewall construction: Three-ply polyester
Tread construction: Two-ply polyester, two-ply steel, one-ply nylon
Approved rim width (in): 7.0-8.5
Tread depth (in): $1\frac{15}{32}$
Section width (in): 10.7
Overall diameter (in): 31.7
Maximum psi: 80

and segmented stone throwers between the shoulder treads help the tires from clogging up with rocks and mud. It's an all-terrain tire that's earned its keep, especially considering the inexpensive price.

SOURCE

Atturo Tire
 888/642-5999, atturo.com

1. Not every truck owner is willing to run plus-size tires that increase the footprint and ground clearance. In cases like this, tread performance comes into play more. We haven't gotten stuck yet in the mild terrain we drive our Ram through, so we're calling the Trail Blade A/Ts a success for our needs.

2. In addition to competent off-road abilities in sand, snow, loose and rocky trails, and very light mud, the Trail Blade A/Ts are a good-looking tire. The stylized sidewall design isn't as radical as some mud tires, but it does help break up the blahs.

3. With the tires at their recommended factory pressures, the Trail Blade A/Ts have plenty of load-carrying ability. A truer test is when this tow rig is pulling a 30-foot fifth-wheel toy hauler loaded with bikes, quads, and enough camping stuff to last a week. The tread is wearing well and not disappearing like Editor Hazel's hairline. **FW**



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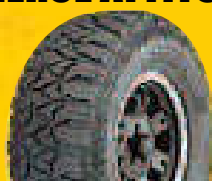


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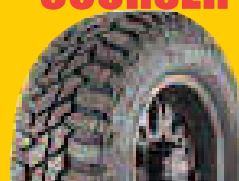
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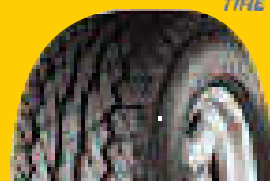
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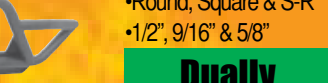


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RAMCHARGER

Dodge SUV spotter's guide

By **Jay Kopycinski** editor@fourwheeler.com Photography: Jay Kopycinski & Chrysler Group

THE RAMCHARGER WAS A FULLSIZE SUV INTRODUCED BY DODGE AS A '74 MODEL AND WAS BASED LARGELY on a short-wheelbase Dodge pickup truck chassis. It would see its U.S. existence span two decades until the final '93 Ramchargers rolled off the assembly line. Ramcharger's cousin, the Plymouth Trailduster, was also offered but production stopped with the '81 model.

By the mid '70s, the Chevy Blazer, Ford Bronco, and International Harvester SUVs all had a foothold in the market for those looking for a backcountry camping vehicle or a large 4x4 that was different than a pickup truck. With seating for five or six adults and healthy V-8 power, the Ramcharger offered Mopar fans their own fullsize SUV.

1st Generation (1974-1980)

The first Ramchargers were quite similar to the Dodge pickups of the day but sat on a shorter 106-inch wheelbase. When the '74s were introduced, they were full-time 4WD only, but Dodge quickly added a 2WD version a year later. We're concerned here primarily with the 4WD models.

First-generation models had a removable hardtop and a soft canvas top with roll-up side windows was also available through dealers. The suspension was traditional leaf springs front and rear, with recirculating-ball power steering as an option. Brakes were power-assisted front disc and rear drum.

Five different engines were offered in various years in the early generation: a 225ci I-6, 318ci V-8, 360ci V-8, 400ci V-8, and 440ci V-8. The V-8 engines were the Chrysler LA series engines with standard electronic ignition, and the two largest V-8 engines were phased out with the '78 model.

Common transmissions included the A230 three-speed synchronized manual (mostly behind I-6 engines), NP435 four-speed manual (6.68:1 First gear), or the NP445 close-ratio four-speed manual (4.56:1 synchronized First gear). For an automatic, it was the three-speed Torqueflite 727.

Dodge varied the axle gearing over the

years to accommodate the various engines, transmissions, and tire sizes. Commonly available axle ratios were 3.21:1, 3.55:1 and 3.90:1. The front straight axles were Dana 44 units, while the majority of rear axles were Chrysler 9¼-inch units. Some Chrysler 8¾-inch rear axles made their way under '70s

➔ When introduced, the '74 Ramcharger was offered as a full-time 4WD model touting the benefits of not having to exit the vehicle and lock the hubs to engage 4WD. In response to the NP203 full-time 4WD system, there were aftermarket companies that marketed part-time 4WD conversions to reduce front axle wear and increase highway gas mileage.



➔ The Ramcharger was introduced back in the day when domestic manufacturers offered buyers a variety of V-8 engines, including big-blocks. Dodge was no exception. By the end of its 20-year production life, the Ramcharger would finish out with multi-port fuel-injected V-8 engines under the hood.



R REFERENCE



🔧 The original Ramchargers had a bolt-on removable hardtop but could be optionally equipped with a soft-top like this that offered roll-up windows. On the first-year '74 models, the door window frame came off with the top. After that, the door window frame stayed with the door when the top was removed.



🔧 Like many of the older fullsize domestics, the Ramcharger can easily shed its ½-ton axles for the beefier Dana 60s from a ¾ or 1-ton truck of the era. Much of the swap is a bolt-on project (drive-shafts will need to be shorted 1-inch), so it's a fairly common upgrade for owners wanting heavy-duty axle hardware to turn big tires.

When placed in one of the Loc modes, the center differential was locked, delivering equal power to both axles. Neutral could be used for a power takeoff option.

While the purported convenience of full-time 4WD with the NP203 transfer case seemed attractive, there were some downsides. Overall gas mileage suffered due to the transfer case differential, and the front axle unitbearings (wheel bearings) would wear prematurely if not kept greased on a regular basis. Mile Marker offered a kit to convert the transfer case to part-time operation, and freewheeling hubs could be swapped onto the front axles. A "Sure Grip" limited slip was often an option in the rear axle.

Starting with the '80 Ramcharger, a part-time, aluminum case, chain-drive NP208 transfer case (2.61:1 planetary low range) was used to replace the full-time NP203, and the wheel pattern changed from the previous generation's 5-on-4.5 pattern to a 5-on-5.5 pattern. The front axle also ditched the weaker semi-float unitbearing design for the more durable closed-hub and spindle arrangement that Chevy and Ford vehicles had enjoyed. This was combined with the use of automatic locking hubs on the front Dana 44 axle, but for the '85 Ramcharger the hubs were replaced with simple drive flanges and a two-piece, vacuum-actuated center axle disconnect was employed to help reduce parasitic losses. When in 2WD, a shift collar disconnected the passenger-side axleshaft and the spider gears inside the open front diff would spin instead of the whole front



🔧 Most Ramchargers came with the Chrysler 9¼-inch rear axle. The ½-ton axle used C-clips to retain the 31-spline 'shafts. The design uses threaded backlash adjusters at the differential carrier. Some builders shun the factory use of a pinion crush washer in these that may cause bearing preload issues down the road. Many years offered rear limited-slip units from the factory. Gearsets over the years ranged from 3.21:1 to 3.55:1 to 3.90:1.

Ramchargers, and we've heard tall tales of semi-float Dana 60 rears, but we've never actually come across one.

The '74-'79s used full-time 4WD with a cast-iron, chain-drive NP203 transfer case (2.0:1 low range). The NP203 used an internal differential to allow for varying speeds between the front and rear axles on harder surfaces. The transfer case had five settings: High, High Loc, Low, Low Loc, and Neutral.

driveshaft and T-case front output shaft. The vacuum actuator mechanism on these would eventually prove to be troublesome and somewhat unreliable in operation.

2nd Generation (1981-1993)

For the '81 models, there was a revised Ramcharger when the Ram pickup redesign was introduced. With this version, the welded-steel top was no longer removable. Also, the foot area for the rear seat was dropped down to offer better rear seating legroom.

The 5.2L and 5.9L V-8 engines continued to power the Ramcharger, and the '88 models with the 5.2L got throttle-body fuel injection (TBI). The larger 360ci, 5.9L V-8 got TBI a year later. Multi-port fuel injection was introduced in the '92 Ramcharger with the advent of Chrysler's redesigned Magnum 5.2L V-8 and then on the Magnum 5.9L for the '93s. The Slant 225 I-6 was phased out way back in the '82 model.

The NP435 four-speed manual transmission was installed in a lot of second-generation Ramchargers. The Torqueflite 727 three-speed auto served through the '91 Ramcharger and then gave way to the A518 four-speed auto (0.69:1 overdrive).

The NP208 continued to be the transfer case of choice through the '87 trucks. Also, the '83s saw automatic locking hubs and shift-on-the fly engagement to allow shifting in and out of 4WD at speed. Starting with the '88s, the aluminum-cased chain-drive NP241 transfer case (2.72:1 low range) was used until the last year of the Ramcharger. The '89s got rear antilock brakes.

➔ The second-generation Ramchargers got new sheetmetal starting with the '81s. The rear side windows also had larger glass panels that wrapped onto the roof. Wheelbase on the new models did not change and stayed at 106 inches. The Plymouth Trailduster would only survive one year with the new body style, as only '81 models were available.



➔ First-generation interiors were simple and practical by today's standards. Here's the view from the seat of a '77 Ramcharger.

➔ In the beginning, Dodge's Ramcharger was equipped with front seating only and rear seating was an option. Low-back and high-back bucket seats and front bench seats were offered at various points through the years.



➔ With front and rear leaf suspension, lifting a Ramcharger is an easy prospect. Suspension systems are common and affordable. Donna Kousonsavath's '75 Ramcharger sits on a 6-inch lift to clear 37-inch tires bolted to a pair of Dana 60s. Frame weak points where cracks can develop are near the front shock mounts. It's always a good idea to watch for frame cracks near the steering box.



➔ The '93 Ramcharger was the final year of domestic production for Dodge's fullsize SUV. Public interest was growing in four-door SUV models. While there was a longer third-generation Ramcharger produced in Mexico, it was never imported to the United States. **FW**

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By Ali Mansour editor@fourwheeler.com Photography: Ali Mansour

WHEN NITTO INJECTED THE Exo Grappler AWT into the well-versed Grappler line, we were excited to see what the “all-weather tire” had to offer. Clearly more aggressive than the company’s all-terrain staple, the Terra Grappler, the Exo Grappler AWT put Nitto square into ring of the growing market of aggressive all-terrain tires. Fit with wide tread blocks, deep voids, and gracious amounts of biting edges, the Exo Grappler AWT not only has a unique look but a Three Peak Mountain Snowflake rating. We could have tested these tires under one of our lightweight wheelers, but it was clear by the E-only load range offerings that these tires were meant for a heavy-duty truck.

➔ While two different sidewall patterns come standard, what’s more impressive is the tires three-ply sidewall. Capable of supporting 3,640 pounds, the load range E tire is a great fit for the weight and performance demands of our ¾-ton truck. For those of you who frequent as many gravel roads as we do, you will be happy to know that the stone ejectors in the tread are actually very effective.



NITTO EXO GRAPPLER AWT



✓Yes



✓Yes



xNo



✓Yes



✓Yes



✓Yes



✓Yes



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To put the tires to work, we strapped them under our '14 Ram 2500. Equipped with a Cummins diesel engine and substantial solid-axles, our ¾-ton 4x4 hauler was exactly what these tires were designed for. Since our truck is still stock height, we opted for a factory replacement size of 275/70R18. With a load rating of 3,640 pounds, it was more than capable of supporting our pickup's max payload.

Going from stock highway radials to the Exo Grappler AWTs was like moving from housing slippers to hiking boots. The noise difference was definitely noticeable but not any louder than other aggressive all-terrain tires we have tested. As we mentioned, these tires can hold a considerable amount of weight. This equated to a very stiff sidewall, which isn't necessarily a bad thing in our application.

We found around 50 psi worked great in the rear and the factory-suggested 60 psi upfront was plenty. Those tire pressures are for your daily commute. If you are towing heavy loads, you'll need to bump up the rear. Fortunately, we didn't notice any real fuel economy penalty with

the tires and found the street manners to be stable and smooth, especially in wet weather. Overall, we found the tire's street manners were very similar to that of the Terra Grappler, which was a pleasant surprise.

Off-road, the tires did not disappoint. While we avoided deep mud, the tires performed great over the sandy and loamy Southeastern soil. Again, these are workhorse tires. For where most of you (and us included) would take your tow rig, they will work great. We did drop down the pressure to the high 30s when cruising off-road for a substantial period of time. This helped tremendously with the ride quality and grip. Sadly, we only briefly had a bout with snow. For our short mountain jaunt, we were impressed at how well the tires kept the truck planted over the white stuff. We were also equally impressed with the Subaru Outback that was battling the powder behind us. So, take that for what you will.

In the Grappler line, the Exo Grappler AWT is exactly what the company needed. It performs better than your average all-terrain tire without sacrificing on-road performance. The fact



Nitto spent a significant amount of time fine-tuning the Exo Grappler AWTs tread design. The staggered and heavily siped tread blocks offer a tremendous assortment of biting edges, while the pitch of the block keeps the road noise down. A unique tread compound was also used to help combat damage and chipping often associated with off-road driving.

that it comes with holes to accommodate TSMI #15 studs, also speaks to its serious winter-weather intentions. Ultimately, the Exo lives up to its all-weather-terrain badge rather well, and we look forward to seeing what kind of mileage we can pull out of these under our heavy-weight pickup. **FW**

SOURCE

Nitto Tire
nittotire.com

SPECIFICATIONS

Tire: Nitto Exo Grappler AWT
Size: 275/70R18
Type: Radial
Load range: E
Max load (lbs): 3,640
Sidewall construction: Three-ply polyester
Tread construction: Two-ply steel, three-ply polyester, two-ply nylon
Approved rim width (in): 7-8.5
Tread depth (in): 18.4/32
Section width (in): 10.98
Overall diameter (in): 33.43
Maximum psi: 80



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By Christian Haezel From the March, 2013 issue of Jp



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MOST RECENT ARTICLES



1962 Willys - Short Bed
A Vintage Adventure Willys
By Pete Trasborg June, 2013
Has our boredom with cookie-cutter Jeeps gone too far? Look, we aren't and haven't been saying that if you find a build that works for your platform and intended usage, do

FEATURE | Jp MAGAZINE


LIKES (3) COMMENTS (5)



1972 GMC 2500 Suburban - Sir 'Burban
By Ken Brubaker May 14, 2013
The Suburban, in production for a staggering 78 years, holds the record as the industry's longest-running model and the large GM SUV has stomped other would-be competitors who have come and went through the years.

FEATURE | FOUR WHEELER


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2014 Chevy Silverado High Country - All Classed Up
By Agustín Jimenez February 01, 2013
Chevrolet has just unveiled its sleek Silverado High Country model which will join the LTZ and Z71 models in the Silverado lineup this fall. We have to admit, we are

FEATURE | 4 WHEEL OFF-ROAD MAGAZINE


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Rigs To Remember
By Four Wheeler Staff February 01, 2013
It's always fun to reminisce and bench race about old rigs, trail tales, and seemingly impossible ideas that never quite came to be. Sometimes a quick glance in the proverbial rearview-mirror can remind us of things we've

FEATURE | FOUR WHEELER


LIKES (3) COMMENTS (5)



1975 Jeep CJ-5 - Apple Green
A One-Of-A-Kind Classic
By Verne Simons April, 2013
There is no doubt that Jeep is an American icon. Almost anyone from just about any part of the world knows what a Jeep is, what it's good for, and what it looks like.

FEATURE | Jp MAGAZINE

LIKES (3) COMMENTS (5)



2013 Pickup Truck Of The Year
By Ali Mansour February 01, 2013
For over 24 years we've put the latest 4x4 pickups available in our head-to-head battle that is Pickup Truck of the Year. To participate in the late-model truck showdown, the pickup has to be all-new or significantly

FEATURE | 4 WHEEL OFF-ROAD MAGAZINE

LIKES (3) COMMENTS (5)

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Jack of all trades

By **Verne Simons** editor@fourwheeler.com Photography: Verne Simons

WITHOUT DOUBT, YOU HAVE BOUGHT A SET OF TIRES, AND IF YOU haven't and your last name is not Goodyear or Hankook, you will be at some point in the near future (we're assuming, in this case, you're 16 and your tires on your first car/truck are still good). Tires do a lot for us, and we ask a lot of them. They also have this bad habit of wearing out or developing leaks that have a way of putting our fun to a halt. Despite tens of thousands of miles, sharp rocks, sticks, glass, and more, we expect them to sometime perform sometimes miracles.

We often get asked what kind of tires a person should buy, and our answer always starts with a question: What do you plan to do with them? The fact is we all want a tire that can do everything all while being easy to balance, long lasting, with great traction, and oh, it better be quiet too. Sounds nice, doesn't it? The fact is mud tires are not quiet, and quiet tires generally don't do well in the mud or on the rocks. At the same time, tire companies have been making great strides in developing new tires that better fill the job of

➔ On gravel roads, our big Dodge handles like a rally car, holding the road or sliding in a controlled manner whenever we want. The Open Country R/Ts are perfect for our big truck because while we use it primarily on-road, dirt, mud, sand, snow, and gravel are all something we will encounter. We've also detected basically no wear on the tires in the roughly 5,000 miles we've put on the tires thus far. The tread voids do have a tendency to pick up small rocks much the same as almost any tire does. On paved roads the Open Country do make some noise, but it is less than we expected. The long center treads help spread the rolling tire over the road for reduced noise.



TOYO OPEN COUNTRY R/T

“doing-it-all” than ever before. One such tire is the new Toyo Open Country R/T. This tire was specifically developed to span the gap between an all-terrain tire and a dedicated mud tire. So what do we think of the R/T? Well, friends, allow us to show you the best way we can, by using and abusing our own set on our own truck. The tires in question are a set of 35x12.50R17LT Open Country R/Ts on forged factory '12 Ram 8-lug wheels. These wheels and tires live on our '98 Dodge 2500 12-valve Cummins 4x4. The truck sees duty as a tow rig, daily driver, and occasional tow rig. We ask a lot of the truck and the tires, and here's how they've performed over the past 5,000 miles or so.



1. Our ¾-ton Dodge is not really a rock crawler, but we did stick the Open Country on a few local rocks, albeit at full road pressure. The treads stuck well to what rocks we put them on, and based on our experience and the tread pattern, we're going to bet these tires are pretty good in the rocks. They may not be a dedicated heavy rock tire on a rock buggy but they are darn close.



2. In even very sticky mud, most of the tread voids clear quickly with a little wheel speed. Stone and mud ejector bars between the large outer lugs help mud clear the voids. Center lugs that help keep the tires (relatively) quiet on-road are also shaped like chevrons to help with traction in mud and loose dirt or sand. Our tires are a 35x12.50R17LT flavor, and larger sizes are available ranging from a 33-inch for a 17-inch wheel to a 37-inch tire for a 20-inch wheel, with similar sizing for 18-inch wheels.

3. The Open Country R/T's sidewall is constructed with a special durable compound, and a fairly aggressive sidewall design helps add strength and prevent tire-killing sidewall damage. All in all, we feel that Toyo did exactly what they set out to do by creating a tire that bridges the gap between a hard-core mud-terrain and an all-terrain tire. **FW**



SPECIFICATIONS

Tire: Toyo Open Country R/T
Size: 35x12.50R17LT
Type: Radial
Load range: E
Max load (lbs): 3,195
Sidewall construction: Three-ply polyester
Tread construction: Two-ply steel; three-ply polyester; two-ply nylon
Approved rim width (in): 8.5-11
Tread depth (in): 18.9/32
Section width (in): 12.5
Overall diameter (in): 34.8
Maximum psi: 65

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CALENDAR

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May 2

What: 14th Annual Jeep Blessing
Where: Mesick, Michigan
Hosted by: Cadillac Jeepers
Info: cadillacjeepers.com

May 2

What: Getting Started Driving Off-Road
Where: Gorman, California
Hosted by: Badlands Off-Road Adventures
Info: 310/615-5473, 4x4training.com

May 3

What: Day 2 Getting Started Driving Off-Road
Where: Mojave, California
Hosted by: Badlands Off-Road Adventures
Info: 310/615-5473, 4x4training.com

May 7-9

What: 23rd Big Bear Jeep Jamboree
Where: Big Bear Lake, California
Hosted by: Jeep Jamboree USA
Info: jeepjamboreeusa.com

May 8-9

What: Ultra4 Trail-Gear Western Regional Series MetalCloak Stampede
Where: Sacramento, California
Hosted by: Ultra4
Info: ultra4racing.com

May 8-10

What: Molina Ghost Run
Where: Hollister, California
Hosted by: California Association of 4WD Clubs
Info: ca4wdc.com

May 9

What: Tire Repair/Hi-Lift Mini Clinic
Where: Hawthorne, California
Hosted by: Badlands Off-Road Adventures
Info: 310/615-5473, 4x4training.com

May 14-16

What: 18th Land Between The Lakes Jeep Jamboree
Where: Marshall County, Texas
Hosted by: Jeep Jamboree USA
Info: jeepjamboreeusa.com

May 14-16

What: 27th Palo Duro Jeep Jamboree
Where: Amarillo, Texas
Hosted by: Jeep Jamboree USA
Info: jeepjamboreeusa.com

May 15-17

What: 30th Anniversary Spring 4-Wheel Jamboree Nationals
Where: Lima, Ohio
Hosted by: Special Events
Info: 317/236-6515, familyevents.com

May 15-17

What: 5th Annual Willys Overland Rally
Where: Moab, Utah
Hosted by: Willys Overland Moab Rally
Info: willysrally.com

May 16

What: NOVA Show & Shine
Where: Manassas, Virginia
Hosted by: Big Dogs Offroad
Info: bigdogsoffroad.com

May 16

What: Dirt Riot Endurance Racing
Where: Tucson, Arizona
Hosted by: World Extreme Rock Crawling Championship Series
Info: werocklive.com

May 16-17

What: TORC Rumble On The River In St. Louis
Where: St. Louis, Missouri
Hosted by: TORC The Off-Road Championship
Info: torcseries.com

May 16-17

What: Iron Range Offroad Driving School
Where: Gilbert, Minnesota
Hosted by: Iron Range Offroad
Info: ironrangeoffroad.com

May 16-17

What: Olympus Rally
Where: Shelton, Washington
Hosted by: Rally America
Info: rally-america.com

May 22-24

What: Memorial Day Mayhem
Where: Punta Gorda, Florida
Hosted by: Redneck Yacht Club Mud Park
Info: redneckyachtclubmudpark.com

May 22-25

What: Hi Desert Round-Up
Where: Barstow, California
Hosted by: California Association of 4WD Clubs
Info: ca4wdc.com

WHERE TO SEND SUBMISSIONS

Address your correspondence to: **Calendar, Four Wheeler, 831 S. Douglas St., El Segundo, CA 90245**, or email ken.brubaker@fourwheeler.com. All submissions become the property of Four Wheeler, and we reserve the right to edit them for length, accuracy, and clarity. The editorial department can also be reached through the website at www.fourwheeler.com. Due to the volume of mail, electronic and otherwise, we cannot respond to every reader, but we do read everything.

May 22-25

What: 47th Annual Total Off-Road Rally

Where: Dresser, Wisconsin

Hosted by: Minnesota Go-4 Wheelers

Info: memorial4x4.org

May 23

What: Sam's Offroad Memorial Day Run

Where: Hot Springs, Arkansas

Hosted by: Sam's Offroad

Info: orvpark.com

May 23

What: Dirt Riot Endurance Racing

Where: Birmingham, Alabama

Hosted by: World Extreme Rock Crawling Championship Series

Info: werocklive.com

May 23-24

What: Vehicle Recovery Skills Clinic

Where: Rancho Cordova, California

Hosted by: Off-Road Safety Academy

Info: discoveroffroading.com

May 24

What: Sodbusters Off Road Mud Bog

Where: New Carlisle, Indiana

Hosted by: Sodbusters Off Road Club

Info: sodbustersoffroad.com

May 28-30

What: 6th Badlands Jeep Jamboree

Where: Attica, Indiana

Hosted by: Jeep Jamboree USA

Info: jeepjamboreeusa.com

May 29-30

What: Race Fuel Energy Drink 250

Where: Caliente, Nevada

Hosted by: SNORE

Info: snoreracing.net

May 29-30

What: 7th Annual The Willys Jeep Rally

Where: College Corner, Ohio

Hosted by: Midwest Willys Jeep

Reunion, Inc.

Info: mw-willysjeep.com

May 30

What: Dirt Riot Endurance Racing

Where: Fredericksburg, Texas

Hosted by: World Extreme Rock Crawling Championship Series

Info: werocklive.com

May 30-31

What: Lucas Oil Off Road Racing Series

Where: Lake Elsinore, California

Hosted by: Lucas Oil Off Road Racing Series

Info: lucasoiloffroad.com **FW**

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01-10 4WD GM 2500HD/ 01-06 1500HD	6"	\$1,295	
14-15 GM 1500	3.5"	\$479	5" & 7" \$1,199
07-13 4WD GM 1500	3.5"	\$429	5" and 7.5" \$999
99-06 4WD GM 1500 Non torsion drop	4" or 6"	\$999	
99-04 4WD Super Duty	4"	\$809	6" \$879
05-15 4WD Super Duty	4"-4.5"	\$649	6" \$799
F150 97-03 4"-5"	\$999	04-08 4"	\$1,299
09-14	\$999		
03-13 4WD Dodge 2500	5"	\$699	5" X-Series \$899
84-01 Cherokee XJ	3"	\$255	4.5" \$459
6.5"	\$899		
97-06 Wrangler TJ	4"	\$499	6" X-Series \$1,049
07-14 Wrangler JK	2.5"	\$139	4" \$499
6"	\$1,339		
07-14 Tundra	4"	\$1,249	6" \$1,299
FJ Cruiser 3"	\$249	6"	\$1,279
Titan 6"	\$1,199		

RANCHO

		- Shocks sold separately	
4WD GM PU 2500HD	01-10 4"	\$1,685	11-15 4" \$1,849
4WD Dodge 1500	06-07 4"	\$1,649	09-14 4" \$1,699
Dodge 2500	09-10 4"	\$1,122	10-14 4" \$1,022
4WD Super Duty	08-10 4"	\$1,308	11-14 4" \$1,240
Wrangler 97-06 3"	\$749	07-14 3"	\$640
4"	\$799		

REDTEK

		- Shocks included	
03-08 4WD Dodge 25/3500	4.5"	\$1,352	6" \$1,382
10-13 4WD Dodge 25/3500	4.5"	\$1,309	6" \$1,382
05-14 4WD SuperDuty	4.5"	\$1,055	6" \$1,185

READYLIFT

11-15 GM 2500HD, 3500HD	4"	\$1,299	
07-15 GM 4WD Pickup 1500	1"-2.25"	\$229	4" \$999
09-14 2&4WD Dodge Ram 1500	2.5"	\$449	
09-13 4WD Ram 2500, 3500	5"	\$1,699	
07-14 JK Wrangler	3"	\$499	4" \$699
05-12 Frontier 2.5"	\$329	04-13 Titan 1.5"	\$229
05-13 Tacoma 2.75"	\$339	07-14 Tundra 4"	\$999

ROUGH COUNTRY

		- Shocks sold separately	
4WD GM 2500HD	11-15 6"	\$2,172	01-10 4" \$1,180
4WD GM 1500	07-13 4"	\$694	14-15 4" \$589
07-13 4WD Dodge 25/3500	4.5"	\$745	6" \$831
09-14 4WD F150	2"	\$182	3" \$551
4WD Super Duty	05-07 6"	\$1,196	08-15 6" \$812
Tundra 99-06 4 5"	from \$1,255	07-14 6"	\$1,875
Tacoma 6-lug 95-04 5"	\$1,498	05-15 6"	\$1,299

SUPERLIFT SUSPENSION

		- Shocks included	
73-87 4WD GM 4"	\$399	6" \$479	8" \$819
12"	\$1,199		
07-13 Chevy, GMC 1500 pickup	6"	\$1,199	8" \$1,499
14-15 2&4WD Chevy, GMC 1500	8"	\$1,399	
88-10 Chevy, GMC 8-Lug	5-7.5"	\$1,199 to \$1,383	
09-14 4WD Dodge 1500	4" & 6"	\$1,499	
Ram 2500 03-13 4"	\$939	6" \$999	14-15 4" \$699
Ram 3500 03-12 4"	\$939	6" \$999	
98-10 4WD Ranger	3"-4"	\$1,499	
F150 70-79 4"	\$427	6" \$659	80-96 4" \$599
6"	\$649		
F150 4WD 97-08 4"	\$1,399	09-14 6"	\$1,399
00-04 4WD F250, F350 4"	\$855	6" \$919	8" \$1,104
05-10 4WD F250, F350	4"	\$749	6" \$879
11-15 4WD F250, F350	4"	\$766	6" \$999
Wrangler 97-06 4"	\$619	07-14 2.5"	\$349
4"	\$749		

SKYJACKER

		- Shocks sold separately	
4WD GM 8-Lug	11-15 7"	\$2,060	01-10 6" \$1,763
14-15 4WD GM 1500	4"	\$1,302	6"-7" \$1,475
4WD GM PU 6-lug	99-06 6"	\$1,573	07-13 6" \$1,545
4WD Dodge 1500	06-08 4"	\$1,139	09-14 4" \$1,663
Dodge 2500 03-13 3"	\$567	5" \$1,361	2014 4" \$999
F150 6"	97-03 \$1,772	04-08 \$1,957	09-14 \$1,399
08-10 4WD SuperDuty	2"	\$340	4" \$842
6"	\$974		
11-14 4WD SuperDuty	2"	\$340	4" \$814
6"	\$870		
Tundra	99-06 3"	\$364	07-14 6" \$1,299
97-06 Wrangler TJ	2.5"	\$387	4" \$499
6"	\$1,900		
07-14 JK Wrangler	4"-5"	\$615	6"-7" \$2,319

RCRCD SUSPENSION

		- with Bilstein shocks	
07-13 GM 1500 PU 6"	2WD	\$1,949	4WD \$2,119
01-10 4WD GM 8-lug Pickup	6"	\$1,968	
F150 4WD 97-03 4-5"	\$1,700	04-08 4-6"	\$2,699
4WD Super Duty	05-10 4"	\$1,450	08-10 6" \$2,400

ZOE

		- Shocks included	
GM 8-lug pickup	01-10 6"	\$1,295	11-15 5" \$1,399
GM 1500 4.5" & 6.5"	07-13	\$1,295	14-15 \$1,195
12-15 4WD Dodge 1500	4"	\$1,409	6" \$1,519
09-11 4WD Dodge 1500	4"	\$1,599	6" \$1,699
Ram 2500 03-08	\$770	09-13	\$1,127
14-15	\$1,124		
RaM 3500 03-08	\$770	09-12	\$1,105
13-15	\$874		
03-12 4WD Dodge 25/3500	5"	\$770	8" \$1,329
F150 04-08 6"	\$1,399	09-13 6"	\$1,549
2014 6"	\$1,299		
Super Duty	99-04 4"	\$809	05-15 4" \$799
84-01 Cherokee XJ	3"	\$290	4.5" \$495
97-06 Wrangler TJ	3"	\$459	4" \$529
07-14 Wrangler JK	3"	\$439	4" \$575
5"	\$1,299	05-13 Tacoma 6"	\$1,249

TRAXDA

		- Shocks sold separately	
99-15 2&4WD IFS GM Pickup	1"-3"	\$57 to \$140	
Dodge 4WD 1500	02-05 2"-3"	\$139	06-14 2" \$129
2014 Dodge 2500 / 13-14 3500	2.5"	\$230	3.5" \$372
97-14 2&4WD F150	2"-3"	\$110 to \$139	
F250, F350	05-10 2.5"	\$129	11-15 2.5" \$149
Tacoma, Tundra 3"	\$155	FJ Cruiser 3"	\$155

FASTEN H

		- Shocks included	
11-15 4WD GM 2500/3500HD	4"	\$1,204	6" \$2,122
4WD GM 8-Lug	01-10 6"	\$2,220	01-08 8" \$3,233
2014 2&4WD GM 1500	4"	\$720	6" \$1,599
07-13 4WD GM 1500	4"	\$720	6" \$2,030
4WD Ram 2500 5" to 6"	2003-15	From \$1,260 to \$1,322	
4WD Ram 3500 5" to 6"	2003-15	From \$1,125 to \$1,322	
4WD F150	97-03 6"	\$2,288	04-08 6" \$2,311
09-13 F150	4"	\$1,543	6" \$1,987
2014 6"	\$1,699		
08-15 4WD SuperDuty	4"	\$857	6" \$1,204
8"	\$1,319		
05-07 4WD SuperDuty	4"	\$876	6" \$1,192
8"	\$1,378		
07-14 Tundra 6"	\$2,300	05-13 Tacoma 6"	\$2,097
Nissan Titan 6"	\$1,804	Frontier 6"	\$2,188
Wrangler 97-06 4"	\$1,178	07-15 3"	\$691
5"	\$1,762		

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♥ **Victor (TX)** "Women notice me more. I have noticed a 30% to 40% increase in confidence. Casanova and Don Juan are 2nd and 3rd to me!"

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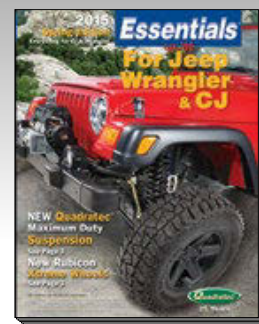
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April 1982: Battle of the Inline-Sixes

We were thumbing through the Apr. '82 issue of *Four Wheeler* when we spotted this great road test story about a Ford F-150 Style-side versus Dodge W-150 Utiline. The two trucks were really cool, but what made the test even more fascinating is that each truck was powered by a six-cylinder engine that was bolted to a four-speed manual transmission. The Ford had a 300ci I-6 engine and the Dodge had a 225ci "Slant Six" I-6 engine. The Ford 'plant made 122 hp and 255 lb-ft of torque and the Dodge mill made 95 hp and 170 lb-ft of torque. Yeah, by today's standards, the power ratings are amusing.

The test took place in the Midwest at the farm of a man named Fritz Sundermann. This immigrant farmer had 60 years of age on the author of the story, which meant he was probably at least 80 years old. He drove an "old" Ford pickup, which probably meant it was at least a '60s model, maybe older. Fritz wanted a pickup that was a draft horse without brains. He wanted a truck that was big enough to do a full day's work and simple enough to ignore at night. Apparently he was the perfect guy for the test.

We wrote that even in the early '80s the two trucks we were testing were unusual in

the truck market, but we were glad to see 'em. "Our tolerance has grown thin from an endless parade of tiny, expensive, impractical pickups, and we've begun to lose hope in finding trucks with enough headroom to wear our hats and shoulder room for the hired man," we noted. We called the Ford and Dodge "corn-fed, bona-fide anachronisms that give you a good feeling in your gut." The author wrote, "They're big and simple, cheap and economical, and their very existence warms my soul with the thought that there must still be a few Fritz Sundermanns around or these vehicles wouldn't be here."

The story noted that the 300ci engine in the Ford "balked" on acceleration and that it

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"needed all four gears." The Dodge's Slant Six "was clumsy but faithful, never balked from a standing start, and strained when forced toward higher revs." We noted that the Ford's transmission was "smooth," but the Dodge's tranny "resisted every move and the clutch required size-12 boots and a trunk-size thigh." We were impressed at the Ford for having both fuel filler doors on the same side of the vehicle ("a design that should be emulated by all manufacturers," we noted), and we dug the "antique" fuel filler spout on the Dodge. The Ford's independent front suspension helped provide a "smoothing ride," while the Dodge, with the optional heavy-duty shocks, "was still a truck."

"Off-road, the somewhat clumsy, constipated Dodge six/granny-low bloomed into one of the most agile four-wheelers this side of a CJ-5," we wrote. And it was off-road where the Ford met its demise. "Ford's F-150 has three major virtues off-road: short-throw pedals, the smoothest shifting gearbox on the full-size market, and the wall-to-wall rear window for spectacular visibility. But the short-stroke six-cylinder engine is like a confused child when tossed into the backcountry, requiring so much gearbox stirring that the clutch failed completely, leaving the Ford sitting helplessly in the brush as the Dodge skittered gleefully into the sunset."

As we read this road test, we were fascinated by the specifications and test results of each truck when compared to modern fullsize pickup trucks. Both of these trucks had an approach angle over 34 degrees, a minimum ground clearance in excess of 8 inches, and on-road, the Dodge returned a max of 17.5 mpg, while the Ford returned a max of 19.3 mpg.

This story brought back a flood of memories for us because we've spent time driving vehicles with both of these engine/tranny combos. We've even smoked a clutch in a 300ci/four-speed Ford truck. We also remember how small these engines looked in the engine bay of the trucks they were in.

Do you have memories of driving trucks with these powerplants? If so, please send an email to ken.brubaker@fourwheeler.com and tell us about it. If you have a '82 Dodge W-150 Utiline, please send the entire truck to our headquarters. **FW**



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